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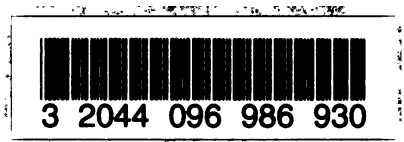


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THE

# SACRIFICE OF EDUCATION TO EXAMINATION.

*Letters from "all sorts and conditions  
of men."*

EDITED BY

AUBERON HERBERT. ①

*N<sup>o</sup> 2*  
WILLIAMS & NORGATE,

14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON ;  
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## PREFACE.

I ought to say that the letters in this volume—received in connection with the Protest—should be looked upon as an expression, not only of educational opinion but also of general opinion. Many of them were not written in the first instance for publication, but, perhaps, are not the less interesting on that account. My friend, Mr. Knowles, has kindly handed me over such letters as he himself received, and of these—with permission of the writers—I have added many to the collection. I have tried to hold the balance fairly by printing all the adverse letters I received, and I do not think I have kept back any criticism that seemed of value. I have also added—acting on the courteous suggestion of the Editor, Mr. Barr Ferree—some extracts from an interesting pamphlet that has lately been published in America, “Examination and Education,” (Leonard Scott Publication Co., New York). It is a record of the opinions of well-known men engaged in American education, and contains, as I venture to think, an even stronger indictment than that made in England against examination, considering that in America the special cause of mischief, that has grown to such proportions with us, seems hardly to exist,—I mean, the separation of the teacher and the examiner into two distinct persons.\*

This distinction should be clearly borne in mind, since it is only where A. is appointed to examine the work of B. that the real powers for mischief, which are latent in examination, become fully developed. The American letters are very interesting, just because some of them shew the bad side of examination, even when

\* “The conditions here are very different from those in England, as we have no special examiners in our Colleges and Universities, with reference to degrees and prizes, but the Professors examine the pupils in the departments in which they have given them instruction.”—President CARTER, Williams' College. See also other passages.

left in the hands of the teachers themselves ; but the evils from which our American friends suffer, though well worthy of careful attention, and very instructive as regards this controversy, seem light by the side of our own.

On two criticisms of a rather popular kind I should like to touch. It has been said that we, who have protested, desire to protect education from the competition that prevails everywhere in the world. If we did, we should undoubtedly fail in our effort, and deserve to fail. Competition is the path by which all improvement comes to us. But the natural and healthy competition of method against method, each seeking for the approval of the public, and a highly artificial competition, that assimilates all methods to one pattern, and draws its principal inspirations from the race-course, are two very different things, that must not be confused together. It is, I think, from a failure to make this distinction that one writer, slashing at us in rather desperate fashion, speaks of some of the proposals of the Protest as "reactionary and anti-democratic."

Again, it has been urged that we should have advanced against each great branch of education in detail, and not have delivered our attack along the whole line. To have done so would have been to have given up the advantage of our position, and to have missed the opportunity of impressing upon the public mind the common lesson, which is presented, everywhere alike, by the condition of the different parts of education to-day. Everywhere alike there is pain and feverish action instead of healthy action, because everywhere alike we are depending on stimulants, are subordinating teachers to system, and treating those who learn only too much after the fashion in which we treat sheep or oxen, that are to be fatted for the market, and are expected to realize so much by the score. It is because general principles, which underlie the successful treatment of human nature, have been disregarded, that the resulting evils are in common, and that the protest should be in common.

It now only remains for me to add some expression of my sense of my own unfitness to take any prominent part in this great controversy. I have felt this many times, whilst fighting side

by side with those whose knowledge as regards many parts of the subject was of so thorough a character, and so different from mine. At the same time I see that in our world, such as it is, very unworthy instruments are used for great causes ; and it is best on the whole that such instruments should not waste time in discussing their own unworthiness, but rather give themselves up, in such fashion as they can, to the work that lies in front of them. ✓

I am afraid in one respect I may seem an idle editor. I have not tried to arrange the letters in any special order, but with a few exceptions as regards foreign countries, &c., have decided to print them pretty nearly as they lay in their packets. I should also perhaps take this opportunity of saying that the canvass for signatures was necessarily made in a very insufficient manner. Had it been conducted with more expensive machinery, and on a wider and more systematic plan, the signatures would in all probability have been much more numerous. Those who did not receive the Protest, and yet had every right to expect that it should have been sent to them, will, I hope, under the circumstances make excuses for the very imperfect circulation of it.

I have inserted in the volume a few extracts sent to me. These might have been indefinitely multiplied.

AUBERON HERBERT.

OLD HOUSE, RINGWOOD.

*July*, 1889.

## ABSTRACT OF PROTEST.

The following is a free summary of the Protest which was signed by those whose names follow, and which was kindly published by Mr. Knowles in the *Nineteenth Century*, Nov., 1888. I have simply attempted to give the general drift of the Protest.

The Protest began by attacking the prevailing spirit of place-getting and prize-winning in education, and, in the words used in another part of the Protest, the dominant position assigned to examination, as the master instead of the servant of the teacher. Whether in the case of elementary schools, of scholarships, or of the class list at the Universities, it affirmed that evils of the same type tended to follow in every case the subjection of teaching to examination.

It went on to notice some of the evils that result from the intellectual racing of boys against each other, warning parents that the physical ill-effects were often not disclosed at the moment; it described the centralising influence which great prizes had on education, leading all schools to adopt the same methods and thus cutting one deep rut in which all those engaged in education travelled; and it then laid special stress on the narrowing and depressing effect which reading with a view to satisfy the examiner's mind necessarily has on the student. As regards this last point, it was impossible to discuss all the hurtful consequences that arose, such as "the temporary strengthening of the rote-faculties to the neglect of the rational faculties, the rapid forgetfulness of knowledge acquired, the cultivation of a quick superficiality and power of cleverly skimming a subject, the consequent incapacity for undertaking original work, the desire to appear to know rather

“than to know, the forming of judgment on great matters where judgment should come later, the conventional treatment of a subject and loss of spontaneity, the dependence upon highly skilled guidance, the belief in artifices and formulated answers, the beating out of small quantities of gold-leaf to cover great expanses, the diffusion of energies over many subjects for the sake of marks, and the mental disinclination that supervenes to undertake work, which is not of a directly remunerative character, after the excitement and strain of the race”; it was sufficient to affirm that in its broad features the system was hopelessly evil and to be mercilessly condemned. It was a system from which the soul had been taken, leaving but an earthy remainder; it put lower motives in the place of higher motives, and denied and discouraged the generous interest that the young feel in the great subjects of knowledge. ✓

The Protest then mildly suggested that those young men who could only be trusted to work industriously under some such system as the present, should be specially provided with prizes by their own parents and friends; whilst those with higher tastes and keener interests, to whom knowledge in itself was a sufficient inducement and reward, were left free to do their work without the shackles and encumbrances of a system that depended on bribes and stimulants. ✓

It went on to assert that just as it was wrong to sacrifice the higher intellectual interests of the student, so it was wrong to sacrifice the independence of the teacher. It was no sufficient defence for the limitation and crippling of all teaching to plead that it enabled you to sit in judgment on the comparative merits of various schools or colleges. The true way of judging the methods of any school or college was to devise means for allowing the public to become acquainted, as much in detail as possible, with what was being done; and, whilst refusing to express any opinion upon the special means proposed, the Protest urged (though not, I venture to think, in sufficiently distinct terms) that parents should seek to understand what their sons were doing, instead of being lulled by the results of examinations into a state of almost complete ignorance on the subject.



X. THE SACRIFICE OF EDUCATION TO EXAMINATION.

Then the Protest attacked the enormous waste of money involved in the prize system. Meeting with some disagreement amongst its supporters, it urged that the thousands spent in scholarships and fellowships were wrongly spent; that they should be spent directly on teaching, on lowering certain expenses at the Universities, on carrying University teaching into different parts of the country; and it urged those, who were anxious to endow education, not to swell the already swollen prize-system by founding new scholarships but rather to found chairs or courses of teaching. It next attacked the system of Government appointment by competitive examination, insisting that Government should not injure the whole educational temper of the country by persisting in this rough and ready way of supplying its own wants, and that whatever difficulties might surround the case of official appointments, the injury done to education was so grave that it was imperative that another method should be discovered.

Lastly, it was insisted upon that, mischievous as the system of external examinations was in the case of boys and men, the evil was aggravated in the case of girls and women. Both the physique and the mental qualities of women were more easily injured, and every effort should be made to dissuade women from repeating the stale mistakes that had been made in the case of men. No mere copy was ever successful, and women's education should be conducted on truer, safer, and more original lines.

It should be added that the signature expressed general agreement in the principles of the Protest, not in the details. A good number of persons reserved their opinion on special points; some signed only to express their sense of present abuses connected with examination; but, as far as I could judge, a large number felt that the evil of examination consisted in its having become the teacher's master instead of his servant, or in other words, in its having been separated from teaching, and having thus got control of the whole educational position.—A. H.

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**xxiv. THE SACRIFICE OF EDUCATION TO EXAMINATION.**

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Miss EMMA WHITLEY, High Schl. Teacher.  
Miss S. WILDMAN, High Schl. Teacher.  
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J. WRIGHT, Arnot St. Bd. Schl., Liverpool.  
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H. F. BAILEY, M.R.C.S.  
HERBERT BAINES, M.R.C.S.  
J. F. BANKS, M.D., D.Sc., LL.D., Regius Prof. of Medicine, Univ.  
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xxvi. THE SACRIFICE OF EDUCATION TO EXAMINATION.

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 ARTHUR C. AINGER, M.A., Assist. Mast., Eton.  
 Sir WILLIAM AITKEN, M.A., F.R.S., Army Med. Schl., Netley.  
 Mrs. ANNIE ALLISON, Principal, Elmswood Coll., Stretford.  
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 ELLEN M. CLARKE, High Schl. Teacher.  
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E. SINGLETON SMITH, F.R. Hist. S.

xxxii. THE SACRIFICE OF EDUCATION TO EXAMINATION.

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Sherardian Prof. of Botany, Oxford.

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JOSEPH WELLS, M.A., Fellow and Tutor, Wadham Coll., Examiner  
Final and Classical Honour Sch., Oxford.

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of Sanskrit, Oxford.

Bishop of WINCHESTER.

GEORGE WOOD, M.A., Fellow and Classical Lect., Pembroke Coll.,  
Oxford.

MISS MARY A. WOODS, Head Mistress Girls' High Schl., Clifton.

CALEB WRIGHT, M.P.

Sixteen Teachers in Elementary Schools at Salisbury have also signed.  
As their names have been given on p. 41, their signatures are not printed in  
this list.

I have left the names of those who have died since their signature still  
standing in the list.—A. H.

## THE SACRIFICE OF EDUCATION TO EXAMINATION.

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*All Names with an Asterisk have signed the Protest.*

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\* DR. G. GORE.

The mischief into which the System of Competitive Examination is running in this country appears to me to arise essentially from the practice of valuing knowledge solely (or primarily) as a means of obtaining money, instead of for its total good effects; pupils will not learn, nor students pursue original research, unless they can perceive definite, and sufficiently immediate, pecuniary reward. ✓ ✓

Money, however, is of much less importance to mankind than happiness; and knowledge (far more than wealth) is the great source of purest happiness. The largest amount of happiness is secured, not by possessing the biggest income, but by intelligently, *with the aid of suitable knowledge*, trying to do the greatest good, ✓ ✓ Knowledge is more indispensable to our existence than money; and ignorance is a greater evil than poverty; working for money alone tends to make men selfish.

But notwithstanding these well established truths, knowledge is usually pursued in this country, not primarily as a means of obtaining and diffusing the greatest good, but almost universally for the purpose of securing to the individual the largest income. In consequence of the erroneous notion that money is of more value than knowledge, the pursuit of knowledge is made secondary to the search for wealth; and in this way we continually sacrifice the nobler and greater object to the lesser one, and public welfare to individual aggrandisement; at the same time the attainment of maximum happiness by the individual is frustrated. In consequence of this error also, knowledge is now commonly treated as a commercial commodity. All this is encouraged by the "System of Competitive Examinations."

SIR T. H. FARRER, BART.

I have much sympathy with the general objects of the paper about competitive examination, and perhaps I shall do better by expressing how far I agree than by signing the paper.



I deprecate with all my heart the substitution of a desire to gain prizes for real love of knowledge. It degrades learning and prevents the prize-earner from appreciating it.

✓ I equally deprecate prize-winning as a substitute for the healthy stimulus of seeking knowledge as a means of fighting the battle of life. Whether a lad seeks the part of Mary or of Martha, the absorption of all energy in gaining prizes is equally dangerous.

To give a lad an income for years as a reward of a year or two's cramming at college, seems to me a monstrous waste of public money, and an impediment, rather than a help to the lad's success in life. I think the effect of training for prize-winning is bad for teacher as well as pupil, provided sufficient stimulus can be otherwise acquired.

✓ The choice of men for the public services and other careers by competitive examination is a very imperfect test, but it is better than none. It ought to be qualified by much more selection than exists at present, and it ought on no account to be allowed to interfere with subsequent selection and promotion by merit and experience.

✓ In all these points I heartily agree with the writers of the enclosed paper. My difficulty in signing it as a whole is that I do not see my way towards any complete and satisfactory substitute. I remember the time, before competitive examinations were introduced either into the colleges generally or the public service; and I do not wish to go back to that time. The turbid but impetuous current is better than the stagnant pool. Even now I do not think that our eager competition for prizes in intellectual competition is the worst fault of our public schools or colleges. Some men may be injured by it; but a far larger number suffer from intellectual indolence and excessive addiction to physical sports, which are cultivated by idle society to a childish and preposterous extent, and are needlessly encouraged by those who ought to throw all their weight into the intellectual scale.

I am not therefore prepared to go the whole length of undoing what has been done in the way of competitive examination; but I desire that it may be watched, limited, and controlled.

Let me add that I never succeeded in a competition myself, and always found the world and life quite sufficiently interesting and stimulating without it.

## \* REV. THOMAS D. C. MORSE.

Some kind of examination must be retained in our Elementary Schools, but much of the evidence given before the Royal Commission on Elementary Education tended to show that by connecting a money payment with the results of the examination, the teachers are tempted all the year through to work with an eye to the inspection rather than to consider the amount of education that they could give to their scholars. Accordingly the educational results produced are mostly of a mechanical character.

## \* REV. T. J. THORBURN.

I have had nearly eight years' experience in school work, and although my "results," as judged by the percentage-of-passes-test, have been satisfactory, I must join with those who condemn the entire present system.

It is fast becoming impossible to *educate* boys, because they have to be prepared for a rapid succession of examinations, which encourage "cram" in every way. And, consequently, not only are boys not taught to *think*, but even what they do learn (which is to a great extent worthless) is forgotten almost as rapidly as it is acquired.

## \* PROFESSOR MAPOTHER, M.D.

In expressing complete accord with the Protest, I venture to offer a few suggestions touching medical education which many years' experience as Professor and Examiner in the Irish College of Surgeons has fixed in my mind. An all-important final competition chokes out the power for original thought and original work, by which alone our Science is to widen its boundaries. Knowledge heaped up for such a trial serves an opportunity, but is not assimilated so as to last for life or to be available just when wanted. It is quickly eliminated. On the other hand frequent test examinations by teachers through written questions and practical exercises train sound practitioners. In all examinations the highest marks should be attainable for practical work, which exhibits physical aptness and soundness of the special senses, sight and hearing especially. Another vital point is that early in his course the student should be relieved of the introductory subjects (physics, chemistry, anatomy, and physiology—in the case of medical education) so that all his powers shall be free for the observation of disease.

## SOME MEDICAL NOTES.

A well-known medical friend kindly sends some rough notes written on the Protest, which, with his permission, I have put together in the following form.—A. H.

## PLACING A DOUBLE LOAD ON NATURE.

Very young children are constantly over-driven, in ignorance or contempt of the fact that  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the whole growth of the male child's brain, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the female child's brain, has to be got through before the completion of the seventh year, leaving no surplus energy to endure mental strain before that age.

## THE BEST THE MOST INJURED.

It is probable that it is the finer and the more valuable organisations which suffer most severely from the strain.

## THE FALSE IDEA THAT LIES AT THE ROOT OF PRIZES.

It is a pernicious idea, and one that we are constantly favouring, that the end and effort of each person's life ought to be the doing of the best by distancing all others. The truer idea is, that we are to do our best in harmony with others.

## THE PENALTIES ARE BEING ACCUMULATED.

The great increase of nervous affections in children is partly due to the examinations, which their fathers underwent in their youth, and when, as is coming to be the case, both parents go through the fire, the result will be frightful.

MR. J. BARKER, HEAD MASTER OF BRITISH SCHOOL, ATHERTON.

*(Forwarded through Mr. Caleb Wright, M.P.)*

For eighteen years I have been Head Master of a Public Elementary School, and am year by year more thoroughly convinced that the method of administering the grants in aid of education *through examination* is bad. The so-called payment by results is, as applied to education, a miserable system. The highest and best results of a teacher's work cannot be measured by an examination. The system impoverishes our teaching and gives no scope for individuality. It assumes that all children have the same mental capacity at the same ages, and in all states of health; that in a given time a delicate girl can learn more than her healthy brother, and that the tired half-timer can acquire in his half-day at school

as much knowledge as his more fortunate companion who studies the whole day.

To secure a big grant, a high per centage of passes must be obtained, but that is no measure of the true education gained by the scholars. It is, indeed, often a measure of the cruel over-strain, and worthless cramming, that the delicate and dull among those, who will form the next generation, have been subjected to for the purposes of money winning. Each child, the weak or the strong, regular or irregular, who enters an English Elementary School, is a grant earning machine. To get the highest grant all must be brought up to the same level in the allotted time. It follows therefore that children of naturally slow development must be more or less overtaxed to the permanent injury of their brain power, and that the brightly intelligent, healthy children have to "mark time" in their studies, while their less gifted fellows are crammed with the necessary amount of knowledge. What are the results? Children are passing out of the state-aided schools of to-day by thousands without having gained a love of learning, in fact with a positive dislike of acquiring knowledge. Take Atherton for example. The Local Board have for two Winters spared nothing to establish Continuation Evening Classes for Science and Art. Now there must be scores of youths who have passed the upper standards of the Day Schools and who should be capable of benefiting by the instruction given at such classes. But no; the system under which they have been taught has created in them no thirst for further knowledge. The goal of their early mental training was to pass certain examinations and so win a grant. They have had enough of that. The *true ends* of education have been missed in their cases. They now prefer a short pipe and the street corner; and the efforts of Mr. Daniel Schofield and the public body whom he serves are of non-effect. Better by far, to my mind, to remove all monetary considerations from the examinations, and pay the grant on the average attendance of children under proper daily instruction, and for whom suitable accommodation and efficient teachers are provided. Give teachers complete liberty to classify their scholars according to their progress and ability. Let our Inspectors, instead of making one dread visit a year to their schools to measure mere mechanical results, and estimate grant, spend their whole time in going from school to school to advise teachers as to best methods of instruction, to watch the children in their work,

and see that they are day by day instructed in such a manner as to draw out their faculties, and train them to think for themselves, so that when schooldays are over, they will have gained something far more valuable than the rudiments of knowledge,—a desire to add to what they already know. Then the country would get the real worth of its money. As it is, grant-earning through examinations makes the termination of school-life a time of rejoicing, I fear, rather than regret.

As to appointments to official positions (and I can speak only as far as this applies to Elementary Schools) I long for the time when practical men of large experience shall be selected to fill them. As it is, University men, who can know little about the work of our Schools, are almost exclusively chosen. The reason for this is that the culture of the Universities may thus be brought into our Schools and the children of the working classes benefited thereby. You, Sir, have been present at examinations of primary schools and will be able to judge how far this is carried out in practice.

I look upon myself as the manufactured article of the Education Department, and in the process I spent five years as a pupil teacher, two years in a London school as an assistant, two years in a Training College, two years as a School Master on probation, and passed in the meantime at least ten searching personal examinations, added to which, ten years more were required of successful management of a school before being dubbed a first-class man (and there is no other means of gaining first-class rank than by this long and successful service), and yet after all the Department do not recognise me as a person eligible for appointment as Inspector of Elementary Schools. Now, indeed, my great age, 39—! would of itself disqualify me for even the chance of becoming an Assistant to such an official. I only mention my own case as being typical of the cases of hundreds of other and perhaps better men.

#### \* THE EARL OF LYTTON.

With the object of the Protest you have sent me for signature I sympathise unreservedly. That part of it which deals with the physical effects of the examination mania I am not competent to endorse, for none of the cases it describes have come under my own observation. But I do not feel precluded on that account from signing a protest in much of which I heartily concur. For even if the physical effects of the system denounced could be shown to be less

injurious than they are represented in the protest, or even altogether innocuous, I should still hold the system itself to be vicious in principle and mischievous in its intellectual and social results. The adoption of competitive examination as the sole or the main means of admission into the Public Services I regard as objectionable. Firstly, because it weakens the sense of responsibility throughout all branches of those services. In the highest of all it deprives Statesmen of freedom (and therefore of responsibility) in the selection of their subordinate agents; and in all the lower grades it encourages those who have passed a competitive examination to assume that they have thereby acquired at the outset certain rights and claims entitling them to be promoted in due course (independently of their subsequently ascertained fitness) to every post for which their successful passage of the examination has rendered them theoretically eligible. In short, they regard promotion as a guaranteed interest upon the capital they have invested, on the faith of it, in the initial examination. If a public service is composed of men holding these views of their relation to it, and administered by politicians who are under every inducement to minimise their own responsibility, seniority is sure to replace selection as the rule of promotion, to the advantage of the stupid or unfit, and to the detriment of the State. It saves so much trouble and avoids so many risks of giving offence. If, on the other hand, notwithstanding the examination system, the presiding Minister retains the will and the power to make promotions by selection, the tone of the Service will also be deteriorated in a different way by an inevitable discontent and sense of injustice among the majority of its members. And, secondly, I think the system objectionable because we must practically act on the assumption that it is, what it professes to be, a test of fitness, whilst for many branches of the Public Service it is nothing of the kind. ✓✓

I would not dispense with examinations for the Public Service. But I should like to see them made qualifying instead of competitive, and applied as tests not of fitness, but of unfitness,—simple sieves (not too fine) for the exclusion of general incapacity—not touchstones (as which they are quite untrustworthy) for ascertaining the right sort of ability. But I don't see room for any thorough reform in the system of examination for the Public Services, without reversion to the old principle of nomination or patronage, and Democracy renders that both impossible and inadvisable. Impossible, because ✓✓

the Democracy would never allow it. Unadvisable, because the Democracy itself is incapable of selection, and in the long run the Ministers of a Democracy would be found unfit to choose fit men. I think, therefore, that it is in relation to the examination system as applied to the intellectual professions unconnected with the Service of the State that the Protest has the best chance of achieving a practical result.

\* MR. F. CAULFEILD.

Having had experience of Public Schools as a pupil, a teacher, a neighbour, and a parent, I can testify to the disastrous effect of the driving high pressure system which is encouraged by the prospect of examinations; boys are crushed by it, physically and mentally. A considerable number have a pale and haggard look which cannot be considered natural, but what is most noticeable about the boys is their dulness, and want of ideas and invention. My impression is that school boys have very much deteriorated in these respects, and that a quarter of a century ago they were far more intelligent, capable, and ready to find interests of their own—in other words, better able to take a place in the world—than they are at present.

\* MR. G. WOOD.

I thoroughly agree with the following objections to the present system. (1) The physical injury caused by overpressure. (2) The injurious effect which the system has upon the minds of the abler pupils. (3) The adamantine fetters which it imposes upon teachers. Moreover, I particularly deplore the fact that the gentler sex has rushed blindly into this net.

I wish an onslaught could be made upon the plan of education which prevails in English schools, especially the so-called "Public Schools." Certainly the critic of the future will be able to say of the average English school boy of to-day

*πόλλ' ἡπίστατο ἔργα, κακῶς δ' ἡπίστατο πάντα.*

\* REV. H. ROSS.

As Assistant Master of the "Royal College," and Master of the Cathedral School, Mauritius, my experience with regard to the system of cram *versus* education, has been that the process of overstraining the mind of the young while the brain is rapidly developing, is fraught with deadly evil, even to those possessed of the healthiest

and strongest constitutions,—how much more so to those of weakly constitutions, in whom a dangerous irritation of the great nerve centres is induced, and as a natural consequence serious disease follows. The over-strain, too, of frequent examinations is so enervating to the mind and body of the undeveloped, that the student is often incapable of showing to the best advantage in examinations; and consequently the least capable are sometimes the winners of the great prizes, simply because they are more robust and less nervous, and yet, in after life, do little to meet the great expectations regarding them. ✓

There is also inadequate attention paid to the mental bias of the student, and classics and mathematics are often forced upon a mind more suited for the study of the natural sciences, and in consequence eminence in any particular branch of study is precluded, owing to this unnatural forcing.

Several instances of brain disease have come under my notice in consequence of over-pressure at school, and these sufferers were from Public, National, and Denominational Schools. Though I have held no official appointment as examiner of schools, I have had many opportunities of witnessing examinations in England, Mauritius, and Australia, and have noticed the confusion and nervousness of those who had been subjected to over-pressure, and frequent examinations.

\* MR. C. KEGAN PAUL.

I have much pleasure in signing the Protest, with the general tone of which I agree cordially.

I differ on some points of detail, *e.g.*, I am not so afraid of the effects of work as you are, and think that if a learner be able-bodied to begin with, and have a sufficiency of food and rest, the brain is on the whole as tough an organ as any other part of the human frame.

The real harm of examinations is far less over-work than the subordination of true learning to what will tell in an examination. The mass of boys and girls at school, and of young men and women at colleges, may have more poured into them than of old, but the best are not so well educated, and the average do not profit by the surfeit. ✓

A simple test examination which would show that pupils have read what they profess to read, which should have no system of



classes, coupled with the prompt dismissal of those who do not work, seems far preferable to the present system.

\* MR. R. PAULSON.

As far as my experience goes true education is sacrificed to an enormous extent in order to satisfy those who continually cry, "Examine, examine." So much is made to depend upon the examination that both teacher and pupil are compelled to concentrate their attention upon this alone. These questions are constantly haunting them, "Who is the examiner? How can I best satisfy him? What is the style of his questions?" So that the pupils, instead of looking upon their work as a pleasure, regard it as a toil, and long for the time when they will be able to escape from the school and all that is connected with it.

Need we wonder why so few, comparatively, attend our Evening Science Classes, the University Extension Lectures, &c. Even a large percentage of those, who do attend, do so because their business or other circumstances compel them to do so.

School examinations are of use especially to the School Master, to enable him to ascertain whether the children have grasped the instruction given them, but they become a great hindrance to true education, when they occupy so prominent a position in our system. Under the present conditions examinations are a source of constant worry to both teacher and pupil. By constant examination many a hard working pupil of average intelligence is discouraged by seeing his results compared with those who are more highly favoured.

You ask what proposals I have to make. The most important is, Reduce examinations to a minimum. Let Inspectors report on the methods of instruction used in the schools and classes he visits, and not on the individual examination. Employers should trust the School Master, and ask him to recommend suitable scholars, and not rely upon examination alone.

\* MR. J. MOIR.

I signed the Protest against examinations not as thinking that competition could be absolutely superseded by any better method of election, but as holding that there is far too much examination of young growing boys and girls. Examinations may be based on sound education or on cram. The former can do no harm, the latter infinite. All examination on prescribed books or parts of books

is dangerous, as leading to excess in study. University Local Examinations and Medical Preliminaries are specimens of what examinations should not be. The younger the pupil, the fewer ought the examinations to be and the more carefully set.

\* PROFESSOR L. MIALL.

I have read attentively the Protest, and hesitate whether to sign or not. It seems to me that the evils of our present practice are not over-stated in the Protest. I could adopt in its plain meaning every important word. But the Protest seems (perhaps necessarily) incomplete. There is a great deal more to say upon the subject, and the adoption of all that is true on one side of a difficult question is not always justice. I know, from my own experience, what schools are like which are left to the uncontrolled direction of the teachers, and I remember how gladly public examinations were received as a means of stirring up the apathy and now almost incredible stupidity of the old middle-class schools. Moreover we have in the Yorkshire College daily evidence of the difficulty of working a class in a subject which is not influenced by external examinations. Such classes are small and spiritless. There is hardly any zeal to be directed, and the teacher is discouraged when he compares his scanty numbers and irregular attendance with the full and stirring life of a class which is engaged in preparation for an important public examination. This does not conflict with any thing which you urge, but it seems to be worth notice by way of addition to your remarks.

On the whole, I think that public examinations are useful and necessary. but that they are made too much of, and success in them is over-paid. Certificates of having attained a certain proficiency seem to me beneficial. I would have the examinations graduated, varied as to choice of subjects, never extremely difficult. I would award no money prizes, and the highest certificates ought not, I think, to be so difficult of attainment as to weigh heavily in appointments. The special student might then be expected to get his examination work done early and easily, in company with a crowd of less gifted men. He would aim at distinction by means of his own useful contributions to knowledge.

I have no doubt that our too elaborate examination system does much mischief, which is, I believe, separable from the good which it effects.

MR. E. F. V. KNOX, ALL SOULS, OXFORD.

I cannot sign the Protest. I have been trained under the examination system, and believe that I am one of many, whose reading (insufficient as it is) would have been altogether desultory and useless had it not been for the healthy stimulus of competition. Further I believe that some of the "crammers" who work only for examinations *teach* better than most Public Schools.

As I understand, the only practical change proposed is the abolition of scholarships and of the few prize fellowships which still exist. Those money rewards are a very useful stimulus to work. Many work for a scholarship who, if there had been no immediate object in view, would have idled along for ever. But they are more than that. The English Universities are expensive, and must remain expensive so long as the general style of living in England is extravagant. The great majority of those who obtain scholarships would not be able to go to College at all without that aid. Those who are in most colleges the most active in every direction would not be able to obtain any higher education or to enter a liberal profession, if your reactionary and anti-democratic proposal were carried into effect.

Nor can I think that the loss of scholarships would be atoned for by the increase of professorships. The actually existing professors at Oxford who are of any use to undergraduates are very few. The majority give lectures in a tone loftily above the understanding of undergraduates, and then blame "the schools" for the neglect which is really a consequence of their own want of adaptation. It is to be hoped that the Members of Parliament who have signed this Protest will move for a return on the lines of that obtained by Professor Rogers a few years ago of the numbers who attend these professorial lectures. It might be a good thing if specimens were annexed of the lectures, to which, I presume, undergraduates are to flock once they are freed from the burden of examination.

There are, however, some faults in existing examinations which ought to be and could be removed. I gained a good deal in pocket by the Irish Intermediate Examination, but at the expense of my education. In order to insure uniformity all other considerations have been sacrificed. There is no *vivâ voce* examination. As an example of the defects of a merely written examination I may mention that I scored well in music, though I cannot tell one tune

from another. The number examined is so large that each examiner can only take a very small part of the examination (sometimes a fraction of one paper), and cannot therefore form any idea of the mental power of the boys. The boys are divided into three grades according to age. I should suggest that in this and other examinations the main fault is that too much is attempted. It is impossible to correctly determine the respective attainments of 6000 boys by any mechanical test. The number examined by any one examiner should not be too large to allow him to grasp some part at least of the mental character of each boy. In fact where schools are to be examined, they should be examined by two examiners going down to each school or group of schools. Uniformity would be sacrificed and some complaints of unfairness might arise, but the suggestions and criticisms of the examiner would be of real use to the teacher and the pupil.

In the Civil Service Examinations the same fault is in a slight degree apparent. But more important is the boycotting of English Literature, History, and Political Economy. In the Indian Civil Service Examination the number of marks given to those subjects is so small that the largest crammer advises candidates to avoid them. They are penalized further by the ridiculous provision by which 100 marks are deducted from the marks obtained in each subject without regard to the maximum. Surely the reasonable course would be to deduct a certain proportion (say 15 per cent.) of the maximum in each subject. At present a boy who scores two-thirds in Latin

receives  $\frac{800 \times 2}{3} - 100 = 433$  marks, while one who scores two-thirds in English History receives  $\frac{300 \times 2}{3} - 100 = 100$

marks. Of the history of all other countries these candidates for the Government of India are not expected to show the slightest knowledge. I am told that these provisions were made in deference to the protests of the Public Schools which were unable to teach History or English Literature. The extraordinary ignorance of those subjects which is found in most of those who come up to the English Universities seems to bear out this statement. An alteration of these regulations would, however, be easy, and, by forcing the Public Schools to humanize their course of study, would show the advantages of the control which by means of competitive examinations the Government exercises over education.

I fear my letter is too long and too much opposed to your views to be published, but I should not like to make any protest against the faults in existing examinations without at the same time protesting against the proposals contained in the Protest.

PROFESSOR DARWIN, CAMBRIDGE.

I regret that I do not find myself sufficiently in accord with you to sign the Protest. It is true that I think examinations overdone, and agree with much in the Protest, but I think that an abstract declaration is likely to be of little service, and that an attack on any individual examination which seems to work badly, together with a definite alternative plan for such case, would be a more efficient plan of campaign.

✓ One of the strongest points in the Protest is that the existing system entails uniformity amongst the schools, and that independence in the curricula would be far more advantageous. This I should grant if we could ensure that school masters should be men of genius and enthusiasm, but unfortunately they are only ordinary men, governed by ordinary motives. A strong motive is the desire to get along easily and comfortably, and as it is easier to do little in old lines than to do much in new, I fear that, if examinations were largely abolished, it would result in a deterioration of the majority of schools—balanced by a considerable improvement in some.

The effect of examinations is to keep both teachers and taught up to a mark (if not the best mark), and I cannot see that the Protest suggests any adequate substitute for this. I doubt whether non-competitive examination by teachers themselves would be such a substitute.

I am convinced that boys and men work much harder when there is an examination in view, and although it may often interfere with the love of knowledge for itself, I do not think it is nearly so destructive of that love as you maintain.

I confess I should look with some fear to the abolition of appointments to the Civil Service by examination, just at the time when democracy may be opening the door to greater corruption than prevailed under an aristocratic system. I believe, however, that in many cases in the public service the heads of departments might be trusted to appoint their own subordinates.

I think that competition for an order of merit works badly amongst men who attain or try to attain to the highest culture, and

I am disgusted by the pot-hunting system by which a young man may accumulate one scholarship on another, until he makes learning a trade. /

With these opinions I am glad to see that at Cambridge there is a decided revulsion against examination. Fellowships are now largely given on the merits of essays on any subject chosen by the writers, and many of such essays have been afterwards published in scientific and literary journals. There are several studentships awarded on the recommendation of small committees. I thus see the beginning of reaction against the extreme examination system, and am in hopes of more.

\* PROFESSOR R. B. CLIFTON, OXFORD.

For many years I have felt with constantly increasing force that a stand must be made against the tyranny of examinations. Useful as they no doubt are in moderation and for certain purposes, it seems to me that of late years examinations have been exalted into a position which makes them pernicious, and that they are being employed for purposes for which they are quite unsuitable. I fully believe that competitive examinations carried to their present extent obscure the true meaning of education, destroy the best teaching, degrade and retard the advance of the subjects studied, and in some, perhaps in many, cases injure the health and impair the energies for future work of the persons brought under their influence. But examinations are only a part of the evil of the present system of education. The practical monopoly enjoyed by classics in the so-called higher education must be overthrown before any really satisfactory system can be obtained. The Protest seems to indicate that some considerable change in the subjects of study is necessary, but I wish more explicit statements had been made on this all important point. I do not in the least desire to injure the study of classics. When it is real, I fully admit its great value as a means of education. I, however, most strongly object to this study being made practically compulsory in the many cases in which it excites little interest, and never produces any appreciable result except waste of time. ✓ /

*(From Second Letter.)*

In reference to the remarks in your letter of the 22nd ult., respecting greater freedom to be allowed to men in selecting their

subjects for study, I must say that while I agree with you, I do not think that men who have been admitted to this University or to Cambridge have now much reason to complain of want of freedom of choice. I do think, however, that the fact that Latin and Greek still remain necessary subjects of study in order to gain admission is much to be regretted.

I feel sure that the Universities thus block the way towards an improvement in higher education, since they force the principal schools of the country to remain to a great extent on the old lines. They put obstacles—not very serious, it is true, except as involving waste of time—but still unnecessary obstacles in the paths of men who might be much benefitted by a University career, though they do not possess any knowledge of Classics.

Much freedom of choice is probably not possible in any single school, but I should like to see more diversity among schools, and I regard the present action of the Universities, in requiring a smattering of Classics as a condition for admission, as calculated to maintain a uniformity of type in all the more important schools. This action is, in relation to educational systems, a distinct hinderance to the survival of the fittest.

#### \* THE PRINCIPAL OF ——— COLLEGE.

Examinations have, in many ways, been useful ; but are now pushed to extremes ; and it is to be hoped they may be amended. During the whole of each school year, the girls of our 1st and 2nd classes are studying the subjects appointed for “the Cambridge” and College of Preceptors’ Exams. They are usually successful in the exams., but in culture are far, far behind the pupils of 20 years ago, who read and digested the works of our best authors.

For these poor girls, it is a constant struggle to “get up” the portions assigned for the exams., and to them “much study is, indeed, weariness of the flesh.” Of course I am not now speaking of exceptionally clever ones, or of boys, who are not expected to spend a large portion of their days in music, singing, art work, &c., but of the “average” child who can scarcely find time to grow into the intelligent, healthy woman, fitted to brave the “battle of life.” And it is difficult to see why the “screw should be tightened,” year by year, unless “brain power” is on the increase, which seems very doubtful.

## \* REV. E. K. BLUMHARDT.

My idea of education is to teach children to think for themselves. This end is to a great extent defeated by the present system of severe competitive examinations, and especially by the multiplicity of subjects which the unfortunate youth of both sexes have to take up. ✓

As regards India, I cannot help thinking that we have been injudicious in introducing, as we have, our English system of education full fledged. The result has been to bring forward, and to place in positions of influence and authority, a race of men who seem scarcely yet to have acquired, or who have lost, the power of governing.

The Bengalees are marvellously quick at acquiring knowledge, and easily pass examinations, but they are wanting in stamina, in courage and real moral power, as compared with the natives of the North-West and the Punjab. I look upon it as one of the bad signs of the times as regards India, that so much influence is given to the Bengalees, mainly because of their ability to take high places in examinations; and that in considering the needs of the Indian races so much weight is attached to the opinions of Bengalees, who are indeed clever, but are often lacking in intrinsic worth. One word of an Up-Country man is worth one hundred words of a Bengalee.

## PROFESSOR P. GARDNER, OXFORD.

In the paper which you have been good enough to send me there is much with which I have full sympathy.

I cannot however sign it, because I disapprove of some parts of it. Nor does it seem to me of much use to attack examinations unless some sufficient substitute is proposed: the proposals seem to me not practically sufficient.

It is not examinations that are an evil, but the abuse of examinations, and it is as hard to find a remedy as in the case of the excess of competition in markets, the excess in athletic sports, and all the other excesses to which our feverish age is subject.

## \* MRS. STUART.

I am each day more convinced of the harm that is being done, especially in the Elementary Schools. I see a conscientious and intelligent master, who is ardently anxious for the moral and mental



development and training of his scholars, obliged to turn his attention from that, and to devote his efforts to cramming their memories in order that they may be able to answer questions to satisfy the examiners. In less than a year after the children leave school, the greater part of what has been taught in this way is forgotten. It is a system which wastes the time and energy of both teachers and taught. .

\* MR. T. SLADE.

Will you permit me to add my small testimony anent the evils wrought by our "Competitive Examination" system?

Whilst living in Winchester I had a large number of pupils in Mathematics and Mathematical Drawing, who, having crammed certain stock questions, came to be pushed through their various examinations, including, amongst others, the "Sandhurst," "Excise," "Engineer Students," "Oxford Smalls," and different "South Kensington Science" examinations.

Their knowledge was brought to a keen edge and was totally wanting in solidity, which perhaps accounts for their pretty general success in "competition."

\* MR. H. ULLYETT.

I have been going through examinations and putting others through them for over 30 years, both in my capacity as a school-master and as private tutor, and I know well the harm they are doing to true education, and how they blight the love of knowledge wherever it happens to exist.

SIR FREDERICK LEIGHTON, BART., P.R.A.

My dear Mr.....

I have received your interesting letter and paper.

I hate everything *machine-made*—probably a machine-made education is amongst the worst products of that order of operation, and I believe that the evils you speak of, the premature sterilizing of the intellect, the mischievous overstraining of the frame, the mis-direction of the energies, &c., &c., do frequently, probably very frequently, accompany the systems prevalent in our day, and that the flower of individuality must needs suffer in this numbing atmosphere; but of all these things I *know* nothing of my own

knowledge and experience. I got little of my education in England *and never in my life competed for anything.*

For my own conviction what you say and what I have heard of existing facts is sufficient, and I may plausibly draw my private inferences, but more I may not; I cannot come forward to assert, by implication, that which I don't know, and have only on hearsay. Nevertheless, I wish your crusade God speed.

\* MISS PORTER.

USE OF EXAMINATIONS FOR TESTING THE WORK OF TEACHERS.

The Heads of Schools judge of the qualifications of their assistants in various ways, by hearing them teach, by being present when they question the pupils on their past work, and by the general intelligence of the Form, while the behaviour of the pupils is a sufficient test of the ability of a teacher to maintain proper discipline.

When there is an annual examination and inspection of the school, the Examiner gives *his* impression of the work done by the several teachers, and I have no hesitation in saying that if the Examiner is both able and conscientious his opinion is of great value to the Head Master or Mistress in assisting them to judge rightly of the qualifications of their assistants.

EXAMINATIONS AS INDUCEMENTS TO WORK.

I think that they are of use in this way, that you need some means of making both the pupil and the parent *realize* the position of the pupil in relation to the work of the form. The reports sent home at the end of each Term are partly based on the marks gained by work during the Term and partly on the marks gained in the retrospective examination at the end of it. In this school no prizes are given, and we have never felt that they were needed as inducements to work.

\* PROFESSOR W. CROOKES.

I am delighted with the paper, and willingly sign it. I have in my small way been hammering away at the evils of competitive examinations for years, and in my Address as President of the Chemical Society, I recently made some remarks bearing on this subject. I see much of the evils of the examination system, and one evil about which you have not said enough is the impossibility

of the examiners acting fairly to the victims. When, as in an instance lately come before me, a few men have to adjudicate on 17,000 papers, how is it possible to hold an accurate balance between them all? Scarcely a week passes without my writing in some way against the pernicious system of "cram" in my little paper, the *Chemical News*. The faculties which come to the front in an examination—verbal memory and the power of reproducing what has been swallowed in authorised language—are precisely the faculties which do not lead to success in practical life, still less to eminence in science.

\* MR. E. C. PRICE.

I believe that we may learn a good deal from the experience of other countries, particularly of Germany, in the matter of public appointments; but I am a little bit afraid that the desire of reform in our system, in the direction of a better selection of public servants, may to some extent overshadow and obscure the vital issue—the sacrifice of education to examination. The mischief is greatest at the source, and I should like to sit upon a Commission with power to call and examine the private school masters who run 13 year olds for entrance scholarships at the public schools. The physical injury is nothing to the mental distortion. At least the old foundations were intended to be charities. It would be something gained if we could restore them to their original purpose.

If we could only convince teachers of sin! I had great hopes at one time of the Cambridge movement for training teachers, but it had no backing to speak of from head masters. Arthur Helps somewhere imagines a man of ability deliberately conquering the highest prizes of the bar, in order to use his position to reform the whole system of advancement. A daring fancy! a radical in silk! Can we expect more from a head master with a bishopric in view? I should like to get behind the heads to the younger men. Their enthusiasm is still fresh, and the change would cost them less work.

*Second Letter.*

Add, if you please, this conviction, based on three years' experience in a successful preparatory school, that a good teacher does not require individual or even class competition as a weapon. If he be a good teacher, he will get better results without the artificial stimulus of marks and prizes. I believe the same thing to be true of adult work in life. It is the commanding interest of an outside

object that impels men to do their best work. In the child you have curiosity and imitateness. It is only donkeys that require the incentive of carrot or goad : nay, I believe that Stevenson would have got his obstinate companion along better in the Cevennes by sympathy. He had not as much patience as his ass. The lame teacher wants a crutch. Don't have a lame teacher.

### THE EARL OF DERBY.

I have read the paper and think the discussion you will raise upon it likely to be useful. I do not agree in its general purport, which is hostile to competitive examination altogether : and I have taken the liberty of expressing my dissent in the form of notes for your reading only, not for the public. You would make your attack more effective if you concentrated it on the one point of alleged injury to health, and asked for an enquiry into that to be conducted by eminent medical men among others. I think the mischief greatly exaggerated in popular opinion, but no doubt it exists to a certain extent. I am less impressed by what you say about "low ideals" and the duty of cultivating knowledge for its own sake. That is good teaching for a select few, but flies over the heads of the many.

As to competitive examinations for public affairs, you will never get rid of them until you have a substitute to offer, giving equally free opportunities to all. Nomination was bad enough in former times, and now with our democratic franchise, it would mean jobbery as unscrupulous as that which prevails in the United States. I am sure you would not support that.

### \* PROFESSOR J. BRYCE, M.P.

Thank you for sending me the Protest against the abuse of the competitive examination system. So far as I have been able to study it, I am inclined to agree with its arguments as well as its conclusions, but perhaps ought to re-read it more carefully a third time before signing. However I am perfectly willing, as you suggest, to say that I agree generally with it, and consider that the present immoderate use of examinations in schools, and still more in the Universities, is injurious both to the teacher and the taught, lowers the tone of education, and tends to warp and stunt the mind of the learner. I have long felt this very strongly as to Oxford,

and am delighted to see that an effort is being made to organize an expression of opinion against the unfortunate path into which the University has been gradually and almost insensibly led.

RT. HON. SIR LYON PLAYFAIR, M.P.

There is much that I agree with in your paper on Examinations, but there are portions of it from which I dissent, so I cannot sign it. Examinations are in most cases evils, though they are often necessary evils. Thus in medicine how could you ascertain the qualifications of medical practitioners except by examination? I have known a candidate divide the aorta in an examination—would you let him do it in real practice? But you may admit it in professional qualification, and reject it in professional education. Much as I dislike examinations in the abstract, I could never find how to dispense with them in my classes. I invented a system which has become universal in the Scotch and American Universities, of making two rails at different heights, one at fifty per cent. of available marks, and one at seventy-five per cent. All diligent students could leap the fifty per cent. rail, and canter about the space between fifty and seventy-five; but only the talented could go between seventy-five and a hundred. In this way very few students were left hopelessly in the rear. Of course this is only a way of having a pass and honours, but it is a way which encourages all scholars, and gives them a definite position in the race.

Examinations in a competitive form for scholarships have strong evils but are they worse than those of patronage? When I presided at the Civil Service Commission, I tried to make a plan to finish the examinations once for all on entry, and by record of results, to induce public offices to select the men fittest for them by a consultation of these records. The plan has only partially been adopted, but we will soon see what Ridley's Commission says about "the Playfair Scheme." Competitive examinations like those in France for every occupation and promotion have been found most damaging. It no doubt stimulates the intellect and produces brilliant results in youth—but after thirty-five the Frenchman's brain, in originality, has become exhausted, and you have few results in later years. Before the days of competitive examinations you had such men as Thiers, Guizot, Chevreul and others doing splendid work up to the age of eighty. Now how few books of excellence are produced by members of the Institute after forty!

I agree with you generally that the growth of examinations should be looked upon with extreme jealousy. Examination is tempered by being united with a teaching curriculum. Divorced from teaching, as in the London University, it is like the Chinese system, which no doubt has preserved China from disintegration, but has cramped, crippled, and restricted her literature and philosophy to the classics of such men as Confucius and Mencius.

**\*THE WARDEN OF WADHAM COLL., OXFORD.**

With your object—to protest against the increased and increasing pressure of examinations, especially the modern extension of them to women and children,—I most warmly sympathise. I will therefore willingly sign the paper, if my signature does not commit me to every part of it. I sign it as a protest against:—

(1) The examination of women, especially their admission to examinations intended for men.

(2) The examination of children, either as in the Elementary School System, or in the form of competitive scholarships at the Public Schools for quite young boys.

(3) The increasing number and undue pressure of examinations at the Universities.

Competitive examinations for Government appointments appear to me an evil, but I do not see clearly what is to be substituted for them.

I cannot assent to the suggestions for the disposal of endowments. To state all my reasons would be too long, but I may say that—(1) I am not prepared to give up entrance scholarships at the Colleges, which seem to me the only means by which the sons of poor men can in a satisfactory way reach the University, and (2) I cannot now assent without much reservation to any proposal for applying more of the University and College endowments to the foundation of new Professorships or Readerships. With this exception, I do not see anything of importance in the paper with which I am unable to agree, and if I may sign with these reservations I will do so.

**RT. HON. J. CHAMBERLAIN, M.P.**

I do not feel that I know enough of the subject to join in a general remonstrance. Before doing this I should like to see and consider what may be substituted for the present system. I am

quite inclined to think that there is danger that education may be too much stereotyped. On the other hand it would be impossible to continue grants of public money without some test of results, and up to the present time I have seen no practical suggestion for securing this without official examinations.

MR. J. WALTER, BEARWOOD, WOKINGHAM.

JJ In the abstract I entirely agree with the views propounded in the enclosed Protest: but if I were to put my name to it, and were afterwards examined as to my knowledge of the actual working of the system complained of, I am afraid I should be unable to give a satisfactory answer. I could not, for instance, say that I think my own boys have sustained any serious injury from the course of education (examinations included) pursued at their respective schools. Personally, I have very little faith in Professorial Lectures—now so much in vogue—but a great deal in the individual care and teaching of a good college tutor or coach—as was the fashion in my time at Oxford. I believe, too, that the *old* system of the “great go,” with its comprehensive examination in Classics, Moral Philosophy, Composition, and Mathematics (for those who went in for doubles) has never been surpassed or even equalled. It cannot be too much impressed upon school masters that the question is *not* what system of education will gain most prizes and scholarships up to the age of 21; but what will turn out the best men—morally and intellectually—at 30. That is my criterion. I am strongly of opinion that *growing* boys should not be forced. I am afraid that the keen competition for prizes now-a-days seriously injures the health of many boys.

MR. A. ROBINSON, M.A., FELLOW OF NEW COLL., OXFORD.

The Examination System appears to me to do much in the way of creating or fostering in average men habits of steady application and of concentration upon intellectual work, and I think the paper does not at all sufficiently recognise what we owe to it in this respect, as well as in others. I am now living in a house with a young friend who six months since went for the first time to a solicitor's office. He is full of zeal for his future profession and

of interest in the cases, etc., which come before him in the office, and he works most regularly and steadily. Four years ago he was a desultory scatter-brained boy—but in the interval he has passed through the “examination mill” at Oxford, and has got a Second Class in the Law School. ✓

SIR SYDNEY WATERLOW, BART.

I rejoice to find that this subject has been taken up by persons competent to consider it in all its bearings. Great good will, I believe, arise from a thorough discussion of the question by persons who have had practical experience in the management of large schools.

I thoroughly agree with the conclusions in the paper, but not with all the reasons assigned.

The system of payments by results has, I believe, been most injurious as a whole to the young men and young girls who have been educated in our Middle and Upper class schools during the last 20 years. It has acted as a positive bribe to masters to devote their time and that of their assistant masters to the superficial development of a small number of clever boys and to the neglect of the boys who were dull or of average ability. ✓ /

As Chairman of the Board of Governors of a large school in Westminster (800 day boys and 200 boarders) I have for more than 15 years taken the greatest interest in its management and progress. I can testify to the general improvement in the education of all the boys since the Head-Master was prevented from competing for result money. After this was done, the Governors increased the capitation money, and arranged for a half-yearly examination of all the classes by an independent Professor at the expense of the endowment. Since this change was made all the parents of the boys have been much more satisfied and consequently the number of applications for admission always exceed the vacancies.

The boys attending the Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations now take better places, and they obtain a large share of the scholarships and prizes competed for by public examination.

I have just seen a paragraph in a city paper stating that 1400 schoolmasters had petitioned against the system of payment on results. I hope this is true.



## \* THE EARL OF ASHBURNHAM.

It gives me great pleasure to join in the Protest against the present system of examination, and I take the opportunity to call your attention to two points which are not mentioned in the Protest. The first point is the utterly absurd nature of the questions which are put to candidates. This has not altogether escaped public notice, and as it must be obvious to any one who will be at the pains of looking over any of the published examination papers, I will not dilate upon it further than by suggesting that some allusion to it might make your case even stronger than it is. The second point is one which, so far as I know, has never yet been raised. Examinations, as conducted at present, are solely directed towards the developement of one faculty, that of memory, which, though it is undeniably a very valuable and important faculty, is neither the only, nor the most important and valuable faculty, which can be cultivated in the human mind. Under this system, candidates are shut up together in a room, debarred from the use of books, and even from communication with each other, and he, whose memory enables him to perform with most credit the extraordinary tasks set to him in this artificial atmosphere, is pronounced to be the most fitted for ordinary work in the real world. But as the greatest intellect can only receive, and the most highly developed memory can only retain, a very small proportion of the sum total of human knowledge, I submit that the best educated and the most useful man is not he, whose little store of accumulated facts is the largest, but he who knows best where and how to obtain facts when he requires them, in the world as it exists, with its ever increasing wealth of books and living sources of information. Such a man has, in addition to his own memory, the memory of all authority living and dead at his command, and may be held to have accomplished as near an approach to omniscience as can be permitted to any mortal.

I can imagine a system of examination which should test this capacity for acquiring knowledge, and the preparation for which should exercise the memory to a salutary and sufficient extent, without sacrificing to it all other mental gifts. I would set my candidates to work in a large library, abundantly supplied with books of reference, dealing with the subjects of examination; I would allow complete freedom of communication between them, and I should feel very sure that the man who should do the best work in

this microcosm of books and men, would be the man most fitted to succeed in the world of men and books outside. If it be objected that under such a system all candidates might attain an equal measure of success, I can only reply that, as this would prove them to be equally capable, it would not, to my mind, constitute an objection ; but I do not believe that it would be the case. I believe, on the contrary, that under the circumstances which I have endeavoured to suggest, industry and intelligence would come to the front, whilst idleness and stupidity would remain behind, just as was the case in the world for centuries before competitive examinations were invented, and far more than can be the case in the artificial and unnatural conditions created by the present system. ✓

Now, although I have ventured to submit this idea for consideration, I have done so with the greatest possible diffidence, partly on account of its novelty, and still more because its adoption would be only, even in my own opinion, the lesser of two evils. But I feel no diffidence or hesitation whatever in appealing to the experience of centuries, and declaring my firm conviction that the best mode of securing efficiency in the public service would be to revert to the system under which, from time immemorial until very recent days, all the great public servants of the world were formed, a system which is still invariably practised in all branches of private service, and under which examination follows, instead of preceding appointment. When a solicitor, a banker, or a merchant requires a clerk, or when a householder requires a domestic servant, he engages one whom he has reasonable cause, either from his own statements, or from personal knowledge, or from the recommendation of others, to believe suitable for his purpose, and he imposes no preliminary test-examination upon his nominee. But from the moment when the latter enters upon the duties of his post until he leaves it, he is subjected to a constant and searching examination, one moreover upon the results of which he depends, not only for advancement, but even for continuance in his employment. The private servant depends on the work which he does in his place, not on the work which he formerly did elsewhere.

Theoretically, this system seems to be based on common sense, inasmuch as it is more rational to judge a person by his daily work than by his performance upon a particular occasion. Practically, it appears to give satisfaction wherever it prevails, and it would not surprise me to learn that even the Civil Service Commissioners had

adhered to it in their unofficial capacity. If it be objected that I am advocating patronage, I can only reply that this is true, and ask, Why not? Surely the principle of patronage is of the very essence of all service, and surely common sense indicates that the appointment of workers should rest with those who are responsible for the work, or whose interest it is that it should be efficiently performed? And if it be further objected that patronage may be corrupt, I rejoin that it need not be corrupt, that it is not as a rule corrupt in private life, and that in public life, from the very fact of its being public, it ought to be very easily prevented from becoming corrupt. But if I am wrong in this, and if it be accepted as a dogma that all official patronage is necessarily corrupt, then, I maintain, consistency requires that patronage shall be entirely abolished, instead of being merely deprived, as it is now, of the power to appoint officials, whilst it is allowed to retain the uncontrolled direction of their subsequent promotion.

But it appears to me that men who are worthy to be trusted with the government of an empire may also be safely trusted with the appointment of proper subordinates, and for this as well as for the other reasons which I have endeavoured to set forth, I venture to advocate the abolition of preliminary examinations and the restoration of patronage as a perfectly safe remedy, and as the only possible remedy for the evils of the present system.

RT. HON. SIR WILLIAM GREGORY, K.C.M.G.

If, as you say in your letter, the protest were against the excessive modern use of examination, I should sign it with both hands. But it goes further than I can go with it. I cannot denounce scholarships and fellowships, and much as I detest the cramming system rendered necessary by competitive examination, yet I could not see my way to obtain a better test of proficiency, and we must have a test. Still I think the nature of examination might be widened, so that a far more perfect appreciation of real merit might be obtained, and I strongly object to the infinite multiplication of prizes, especially among the lower forms of our public schools. They cannot fail to distract the boys from their regular and proper work. But I do not condemn the competition for certain annual prizes, scholarships, etc., among the higher boys. It should be the master's duty to see that such competition does not overshadow other school-

work. I do not sign the Protest, though I hope it may be sufficiently well signed to impress public attention. I have often talked over this subject with my old friend, Mark Pattison. He would have gone all the way with you, but we used to part company at pretty much the same kind of half-way house as I have indicated to you.

*From another Letter.*

I owe a good deal to competition myself, and I should be ungrateful were I to denounce it altogether, however much I may deprecate its success. The happiness of my old age are the Classics, and through my whole life they have been to me a constant pleasure. It was successful competition for one of the annual prizes at Harrow, Latin Alcaics, which first set me really to work heart and soul at the Classical authors, and subsequent successes acted as encouragement both at Harrow and at Oxford. I think, indeed I feel sure, that without this stimulus to exertion, this desire *ὑπείροχος ἔμμεναι ἄλλων*, I should not have been a hard reading man. There are many young men who love learning for learning's sake,—they are the best of their kind,—but there are many others, who have read much, yet whose original motives for study were not pure and translucent, but undoubtedly tinged by ambition; and of that class was I.

Again willingly acknowledging, as I do, the mischief of "cram," I am forced to take a practical view of the matter. I am unable to discover any other test for public employment than proficiency such as it is. The present system teaches something, and (through it—?) we get rid of political patronage and jobbing. Where the present system seems to me most detrimental, is not in the case of fellowships and scholarships, or in that of the lowest grades of the Civil Service, but in the Army and Navy and higher branches of the Civil Service and of India. I have no objection in these cases to competitive examination, but I should have it of a very different kind. I omit all reference to Army and Navy examination. Much of it is special, and what is called "cram" is not so objectionable, considering the ignorance which used to prevail in these two services, nor do I touch on the Home Civil Service, as somehow or other the best men are generally found out and work up to the top, but as regards the Civil Service of India, the composition of which is infinitely more important, I would urge the most strenuous efforts to obtain a class of men whose high qualities would render them safe governors of that vast possession. Young men chosen at present solely by competition,

often by luck in the questions asked, proceed to administer districts with a population of thousands of human beings. The large stock of "cram" brought out by the young official is but an inadequate adjunct to meet such responsibility. He has to deal with races, a large number of whom are highly intellectual, and their management and contentment requires not a mere man of ill-digested knowledge, but thought, judgment, self-restraint, and propriety, at least of outward conduct and manner. It is difficult here at home to estimate the mischief which, as a rule, is caused in the native mind by an ill-bred, coarse young man, however filled he may be with "cram." It is easy enough to state what is to be desired in the selection of members of the Indian Civil Service, but it is a very different thing to suggest any plan for the attainment of these desiderata. I cannot see how examinations can be avoided, but I should have them so fashioned as to obtain young men of thought and wide views, with a thorough knowledge of the great principles of jurisprudence, civil and international; with fairly good instruction in Latin and Greek, something more than in Porson and Elmsley's criticisms and a facility for composing verses; and a thorough acquaintance with French and German. I should require, were it possible, that the young men selected should have the manners and self-respect of well-bred English gentlemen; a good training in horsemanship; and I should even go so far as to welcome as an adjunct a course of veterinary study. But how are we to obtain all this? How can we escape examinations and competitions, which give the most proficient candidates the choice of presidencies. These examinations and competitions do not afford the slightest criterion of character and conduct, and I doubt if any system of probation would be practicable. One would naturally say, establish a college for this service, and there carry out your ideas, but the experience of Haileybury is not encouraging.

If a certain number of these appointments were given to the Universities with conditions as to the nature of the training, I have no doubt the selection would be generally judicious, but you cannot shut the door in the face of private and home tuition. One step, however, of the greatest importance can be taken, that is, to advance the limit of age, from (I think) eighteen to twenty-three, the latter being the present limit for the Ceylon service. This would be a heavy blow to "cram." For more time would be given to young men to complete their studies, to exercise their powers of thought, and to

master the subjects I have indicated. The men appointed would have selected their career instead of having it selected for them, and possibly being dissatisfied with it; many of them would have had a University training and three years' converse with society where a gentlemanly tone may be expected; they would have arrived at a time of life when they would understand the tendencies of public opinion at home on social and political problems. I may add that this change is urgently demanded by native candidates for the Indian Civil Service. I am quite aware that young Englishmen can take their degrees, and actually receive salary during their residence at the Universities for, I believe, two years, but that is *after* the examination for the appointment, which is a very different thing.

I hardly think the occasion justifies these remarks, except that they indicate how rejoiced I should be, could we in this most important branch of the public service mitigate the supremacy and mischief of "cram."

\* PROFESSOR K. PEARSON.

Will you allow me to state how much I sympathise with the Protest against the abuse of examinations which you have kindly forwarded to me? That abuse seems to have arisen from a very mistaken, but very widely spread, view as to the object of education. It is commonly considered as a means of imparting a knowledge of facts and not as a process of developing and training the intellectual faculties to cope with facts in after-life. "I shall give my son," said a parent to me recently, "a scientific education; it gives him a knowledge of facts which will be practically useful to him." These words concisely sum up the current error. It seems to me almost indifferent (allowing, of course, for individual bent) whether a boy is trained on Greek Grammar or Algebra; the amount of education he has received, *i.e.*, the growth of his mental capacity, will depend to a very great extent on the character of his teacher. A first-rate mathematical or classical scholar makes a good lawyer or doctor not from any "knowledge of facts useful in practice," but because his intellectual powers have been successfully developed. To ascertain the results of education, to inquire into mental growth, must be an *individual* process. The only examination capable of investigating growth must bring the examiner into personal contact with the examined, and allow him to adapt

his form of examination to each individual student. To test the intellectual capacity of two or three hundred students on the same set of papers is a gigantic farce, and a degree based upon such an examination is absolutely no evidence that the student has received any education whatever. These two or three hundred students, if they are really educated, ought to have come under the influence of individual teachers and individual methods of thought; yet as a test of their reasoning powers, they are requested to show a knowledge of *facts* carefully limited to a particular schedule. It is at this point that the chief evil of the present system arises: *It destroys all originality in the teacher, and therefore checks the best incentive to growth in the student.* The only originality that can be displayed under an examination-schedule is in re-grouping the schedule facts, so that the student can more successfully carry them into the examination room. This is peculiarly the function of the "crammer." The "crammer" repeats and repeats his particular course till he destroys all power he has of "educating." It is not only the originality but the *freshness* of the teacher which is destroyed when he is the mere slave of examinations. He ought frequently to change the topics upon which he lectures, but if he ventures outside the schedule he loses his pupils, and very frequently with them his income. It is astonishing what an accurate knowledge students gain of the range of the examination-schedule! I have frequently noticed the pencils fall when I have ventured slightly outside its limits; if one continues so wide a-field for two or three lectures the number of absentees will increase, till in a fortnight the nearest crammer has a marked increase in his numbers. The freedom of the German teacher to choose his own subject, and of the student to have his training tested on the general lines on which he has been taught, marks the gulf which separates such an examination-colossus as the University of London from a real educational body like the University of Berlin. That which most excites a student to investigate and test his own powers, namely, an insight into the unsolved problems which form the direction of the teacher's peculiar line of inquiry, is rigidly excluded by the schedule, which never ventures to diverge from the field embraced by the current text-book. If it did, there would be a great outcry that "one teacher's students were being favoured at the expense of another's." Could any system be more ridiculous, if it were not really so nationally disastrous in its results?

One or two instances of the working of the examination system from my personal experience may possibly interest you. A student once attended an elementary course on Dynamics for four or five lectures, he then came to me and gravely said he thought he must have made an error in the hour, as he had wished to attend a course on Dynamics, but "judging from the examination papers of the last few years," he thought he had been hearing a different subject. On another occasion I examined in elementary mathematics a certain public school. The "schedule" included the matter of Euclid I. and II. My paper, consisting of a very few questions, asked for a proof of some of Euclid's results in every-day language. I received with the boys' answers a copy of my paper, as it had been given to them, namely, with the every-day language replaced by Euclid's statements and lettering. There was also an explanatory note from the senior mathematical master to the effect that his boys had learnt their geometry from *Euclid*, as was required by the "schedule." As a last specimen of the ill-effects of the system, I may mention a paper in which I asked for a brief explanation of a certain physical quantity. I received about forty answers, and against each of them, I believe, I was able to write the name of the text-book from which it was extracted. One answer only added to the text-book definition: "But I don't understand it; it seems contradictory." That was the only answer which appeared to give evidence of "education," and the only one I marked.

✓ I fear I must apologise for the length of this letter, but it will at least bear testimony to my sympathy with your endeavours. The Protest will, I think, be useful, because it may reach parents, who after all are chiefly to blame for supporting the present system; they have not the courage to "educate" John, while they see their neighbour's Jack adorned, as bachelor or even doctor, with the most brilliant examination feathers.

REV. E. C. WICKHAM, HEAD MASTER, WELLINGTON COLLEGE.

Every school-master must have the greatest sympathy with your general feeling. The practical evils of the competitive system, as it is, are always before us. It seems sometimes to make real education, wholesome development of the natural taste and faculties, impossible. It kills originality and even intellectual interest. We live in a hurry which allows no knowledge to root itself. Some



of all this is inherent in the principle—some belongs to the clumsy, pedantic, and yet disorganized way in which public examinations are ordered. The expression of opinion that you are eliciting will be very valuable in stopping further developments of a system already carried too far. Perhaps you may even persuade the *Pall Mall* that it is doing no good in making a class list of schools arranged on the single principle of counting the competition prizes won in the year. You will lead people who do not see their way to an abolition of competition to think carefully how its worst evils may be met.

I could say a good deal from this last point of view, but I feel that no one has the right to condemn the whole existing system unless he suggests a different one, and I certainly am not prepared to say either that competition has done no good in stimulating work in the past, or that I see the way to dispense with it altogether. But we have come to a time when we should be retrenching and amending, not stimulating and extending it.

REV. C. W. PENNY, ASSISTANT MASTER, WELLINGTON COLLEGE.

I am entirely at one with you in my general sympathies with the movement against the abuse of Examinations. Here we have full experience of their evil, in the almost entire destruction of our Classical Teaching. There is hardly a form in the Classical School in which are not to be found some four or five boys for whom special arrangements have to be made in view of some future examination. The result is that the school is sub-divided *ad infinitum* into small groups of boys, and much of the feeling of cohesion and emulation which characterised the old Classical Form is thereby taken away. The Form Master is unduly fettered in the subjects he has to teach, and in the time he can give to the multifarious variety of them.

PROFESSOR WESTLAKE, CAMBRIDGE.

1. There can be no thorough teaching unless the pupil is often required by his teacher to reproduce what he has learnt, or thinks he has learnt. A well taught pupil will not find this reproduction more formidable, or more exciting, when called for by an examiner than when called for by his teacher.

2. The teaching ought to rule the examination, which should test it, and not the latter the former. In this we agree, and I therefore sympathise with the movement for erecting every teaching body, of importance enough to inspire confidence, into an examining body, so that it may be self contained and rule its own studies, instead of having them ruled by the examinations of the University of London. The Victoria University is a case in point.

3. But it does not in my opinion follow—and herein I think we shall differ—that the individual teacher should not be largely ruled by examination. Very few teachers are fit for complete independence. If, through the independence of the institution, considered under the previous head, the public opinion of its teaching body, which will be formed by the best of them, is allowed free scope, examinations are a useful method of enforcing that public opinion on the majority of them. Men like those whose names you quote to me are the select few who could usefully be trusted with individual independence. They must be contented, when occasion requires it, to work a little outside the systems of their respective institutions. An army would be miserably routed if it were under no more discipline than would be sufficient for one or two men in a company.

4. Cambridge, in my time, very fairly represented the relations between teaching and examination for which I have contended above. Such denunciations as those in your paper could not, then at least, have been justly applied to it. No doubt a certain number of men, who felt that not only their comfort but their very living depended on success at the University, read with too exclusive an eye to the examinations. But this was not the case even with all the poor students, and among the generality of those men who were intellectual enough to read under any system the tone and manner of reading were what I should call liberal and not cramped. It is possible that this may be no longer so. The outcry I hear, together with what little I have been able to observe, leads me to suspect—I will not put it higher—that the increasing devotion to athletics has lowered the intellectual tone, and that men blame the system because they have no longer the free intellectual interest necessary for using it properly.

5. I agree that, if my suspicion is correct, the system may have to be altered. If it fails, it does not much matter whether it has failed of its own vice or because the men are no longer equal to it.

I shall keep my eyes open in my renewed connection with Cambridge as a professor, but I do not think it wise to pledge myself in advance.

6. I think it very likely that the public schools allow themselves to be too much ruled by the University system. I should wish to see them assert their independence, and I do not think they would lose by it, now that so many parents are obliged to think of other than University openings for their sons. This is applying No. 2, above, to the schools. But to do it requires independence of character, which is a sad want now.

7. I will not speak of any part of our educational systems of which I know but little. Only I will say that a nephew of mine got into the Indian Civil Service by the coaching of Mr Wren and the tutors employed by him, and I have no hesitation in saying that in that process he got a really good education.

8. I must add to what I have said under No. 4 that, if all examinations were abolished to morrow, men who are filled with the thought of how to make their work pay will find out, in any system, how that can be done, and will fasten on the weak point of the system accordingly. And it might be by worse methods than those of examinations, for instance, by cringing, and aping a teacher's mannerisms. You cannot invent a system which shall be proof against abuse, when the motive for abusing it is strong.

October, 1888.

#### MRS. WESTLAKE.

I agree with you that true learning is to a great extent lost sight of in the endeavour to pass examinations, but I am not inclined to condemn the latter wholesale; and till some other means can be devised for ensuring that poor men without interest may secure their share of the prizes to be competed for, I am not prepared to do away with examinations which are open to all.

As to Elementary schools, I think the teachers more than the examinations are at fault. The teachers, in their anxiety for mechanical results, have forgotten that general intelligence, putting aside the higher reasons in its favour, always tells the best even from the lowest point of view, that of securing a good grant.

## MR. W. RATHBONE, M.P.

Many of the arguments in this paper deal with dangers which are, I fear, very real, but I have not yet been able to see how they are to be met. I cannot see how without some form of payment by results our elementary education is to be kept up to the mark. I fear that without competition the entry to our public service is too likely to be made a means of corruption, and that without scholarships clever children of the poorer classes would be unable to obtain higher education.

I cannot therefore sign the Protest, but I have sent it on for consideration to a friend who has for 15 years taken a most active part in the improvement of education.

## REV. DR. E. WARRE, HEAD MASTER, ETON.

I cordially agree in principle with most of the paper. "Eight hours for work, eight hours for play, eight hours for sleep," should make up the day of the older public school boy; and for the younger boy, less work, more sleep, and more play. Work to include all preparation and religious exercise. Play to include meals. Our French friends are beginning to discover the result of the demand of "*onze heures*" of the younger and "*treize*" of the older boys as the accompanying paper will show you.

It is curious that our educationalists who are clamouring for Ministers of Education and State-directed public schools, seem to be unaware that the results of the educational systems in France and Germany—those systems of pressure which they so much admire, and would have us imitate—are filling sensible people in those two countries with great alarm. We have constantly at Eton visits from the enlightened foreigner, who is smitten with envy of the free life and the healthy happy look of our boys.

I send you, by this post, a copy of a little pamphlet on Athletics, which I wrote for the International Health Exhibition, in which I think there is much with which you would agree.

The great increase of the number of boys wearing spectacles, even at Eton, is not without significance. It is the able and the studious boy who, in the main, suffers. Many a bright keen intellect of 10-12 has become dull and blunt, and has lost its temper by 15 or 16, owing to over-preparation with a view to scholarships.

In such cases the mental elasticity gets what the engineers call a "permanent set," and rarely recovers itself. I hope that the paper may have a good effect. But the competition for entrance scholarships at schools is at present enormous, and parents are so readily enthralled by it that any change in the right direction will be difficult.

I would add that, while it is, in my opinion, not possible to alter the system of competition by examination, it is possible to ameliorate the conditions of examination. But before anything can be done, the question of the scope and methods of public examinations as at present conducted should be carefully enquired into. This enquiry cannot be carried out satisfactorily except by a duly constituted authority, such as a Royal Commission. At present there are no data authoritatively ascertained, upon which any improvement can be based. Each party in the controversy marshals its own evidence.

#### EXTRACTS OF LETTERS FROM PROF. G. F. NICHOLL, M.A., OXFORD.

How are you to test a man's 'education' without 'examination'? Admitting (as you do) the necessity of the latter, which must be necessarily restricted to certain definite subjects prescribed for the former, the tests of the acquisitive powers of individuals must, in fairness, imply a fixed period of time for 'the study' (take the term as you like) and attainment of those subjects by those individuals. And it seems to me that, so long as one person has more brain-energy than another, you may find the time allowed too much for one person and too little for another person, who will have 'to cram' or decline the test. The patent inferences to be drawn from this inevitable state of things I pass by and leave. Of course, if you do away with 'classes,' 'prizes,' 'competitions,' *et hoc genus omne*, you do away with the necessity of 'cramming' to a certain extent, but the thing remains as an ultimate and necessary fact of this our mundane existence. The Counsel who "was only instructed this morning, my lord," has had 'to cram' his case. The Physician who has been suddenly called to interview a "very interesting subject" has "had to look into the books, you know." A bore of the *genus* M.P. has greedily 'got up' a number of killing facts and figures to prove to his admiring constituents that he is the man for the seat on the treasury bench which the minister he bores occupies. 'Cram' of every kind is the favoured and inevitable

parasite of 'education.' But, of course, the man who has the best 'education' in any particular line needs the least 'cram' therein; will it be contended that he needs *none*? My Lord Chief Justice should be an incarnation of Law; but, he proposes "to deliver judgment in this case to-morrow": he wants 'to cram' a bit in the interval, of course. After all, your 'education' is but the substratum or raw material, on which is built, or out of which is manufactured, the mental state or attitude you are compelled to take up *suddenly* in some one of the countless phases of life. 'Education' notwithstanding, 'cram' there must be; and if so, where, I ask, and how, do you propose to draw the line between it and 'education' as you call it?.....

In so tenderly excluding youth from the sphere of 'cram' you seem to me to 'strain the gnat and swallow the camel.' I agree with you on one point—that there are classes of people to whom 'cram' is but physical death; but, I don't agree with your views in general, because they seem to me utopian, and don't recognise a patent (? deplorable) element of our practical existence, which you cannot eliminate—do what you will—from the life as it is of both young and old.....

I have been teaching actively for well-nigh a quarter of a century, and have always endeavoured to build up and lay down *broad* principles in lecturing to lads, leaving them 'to cram' details in the sequel, if need be. That 'the cramming' of details has assumed such alarming proportions is mainly due, in my opinion, to the swagger and stupidity of many examiners, who—to use the expressive words of an old pupil of mine—"examine as if they were writing a book.".....

Considering the pressure of life's duties when we attain middle age, I am inclined to posit a paradox and say that a lad ought to be 'educated' 'to cram'—intelligently!

\* MR. W. BUTLER.

It is customary at the periodical meetings of Teachers' Associations—in connection with the N.U.E.T.—to spend a part of the time on "Wrinkles." This term is synonymous with "Tips," and the object in discussing this question is to be able to be prepared for the crotchets and idiosyncracies of H.M. Inspectors, and their assistants. Consequently, boys are taught in such a manner that

attention is not paid to their real training and education (as would be done by giving good object and science lessons), but they become mere automatic machines, into the slits (so to speak) of which the Inspectors drop their favourite ideas embodied into questions, and out roll the answers! And yet I venture to think that the elementary teachers are not to blame, considering the present system of payment by results.

#### FROM SIXTEEN ELEMENTARY TEACHERS.

*(The following paper has been forwarded by the Teachers whose names are given below.)*

We, as teachers, either in or connected with Elementary Schools, wish to lay before you the opinions we have formed, as a result of our own experience.

1. Owing to the financial condition of the school, and often the teacher's salary depending so largely on the results of exercises performed on a given day, the true aim of education, viz., that of qualifying the child for the worthy performance of the duties of life, is, if not entirely lost sight of, at least subordinated to the absolute necessity of preparing him to pass successfully through the examination ordeal. The teacher is thus driven constantly to ask himself, not, will this be good for the child to learn, but will this show up successfully in the examination, and to attempt incessantly to force knowledge into the child's mind instead of teaching him the art of acquiring it.

2. The Government Grant is paid for success in certain subjects of a very limited curriculum. All subjects therefore lying outside its limits are perforce excluded, the child's mental horizon is narrowed, moral and physical training is neglected, whilst the incessant concentration of the mind on the driest elements of knowledge causes a revolt against learning of every sort.

3. We believe that 20 per cent. of our scholars might with advantage go in six months through the course now laid down for a year. But as their promotion would naturally increase the risk of failure in the Government examination, and would cause an absolute cessation of grant as soon as they had reached the Seventh Standard, this promotion is never made. The brighter and more intelligent of our children are therefore kept marking time for six months.

On the other hand 20 per cent. of our scholars need two years to get through the year's course with comfort, but the thought of the examination day with its attendant financial and professional terrors, drives the teacher to subject such children to constant pressure, and to resort to mechanical short cuts and dodges in order that by any means they may pass the ordeal.

4. We believe that the evils caused by the paramount influence of the examination day are aggravated by the fact that the curriculum of instruction is devised and administered by men who have had no practical experience in the art of teaching. ✓

5. We believe that the undue retardation of some, the over-pressure of others, and the mechanical methods forced on the Schools have inflicted irreparable injury on many of our scholars.

ALFRED WHEELER, 15 years Head Master of St. Edmund's Boys' School, Salisbury.

JOHN C. CORBY, Wilton, Salisbury; 23 years Head Teacher in Elementary Schools.

EDITH E. FANNER, Head Mistress of St. Edmund's Infant (Practising) School, Salisbury; eleven years Head Mistress of Public Elementary Schools.

DANIEL SUTTON, 6 years Head Master of St. Martin's Boys' School, Salisbury, and an Elementary Teacher for 8 years.

PRISCILLA A. CURTIS, Head Mistress of St. Martin's Infant School, Salisbury, and an Elementary Teacher for 4 years.

EDITH A. FOX, St. Mark's School, Salisbury; Head Mistress of Elementary School, 5 years.

FREDK. J. MAIDMENT, Amesbury Church of England School; an Elementary Teacher 9 years.

EDWARD WM. FLOWER, the Grammar School, Amesbury; 46 years Head Teacher in Elementary Schools.

SAMUEL GREEN, Winterslow National School; Head Teacher 12 years.

ALFRED WM. TUFFIN, 10 years Head Teacher of Boys' National School, Westbury, and Head Teacher in Elementary School 16 years.

SYDNEY JOHN BRITTON, 16 years Head Teacher of Salisbury Free School, and Head Teacher in Elementary Schools 19 years.

ANN B. BASCOMBE, Head Teacher of Salisbury Free School (Girls), and Head Teacher in Elementary Schools for twenty three years.



G. W. TUCK, 21 years Head Master of the Fisherton British School, Salisbury.

LUCY KING, 14 years Head Mistress of Fisherton Infants' School, Salisbury.

ADA CLARK, 5 years Head Mistress of Fisherton Girls' School, Salisbury.

ARTHUR SMITH, 3 years Head Teacher of Fisherton Nat. School and 7 years Head Teacher of Nymphsfield Nat. School (Glos.).

\*MR. F. LEVANDER.

There is one point, which is merely touched upon, on which I should like to give my experience. I have been engaged in teaching for 33 years (13 in one of our largest public schools), and during the whole of that time I have never met with pupils who worked more thoroughly, or with greater zeal than in a school with which I was intimately connected for eight years, in which there were no prizes and no punishments. *Mens conscia recti* was the only reward; the pupils were trained to be intellectual beings, not mere machines, and many of them (it was not a large school) have made their mark in politics, commerce, and the professions, and I have no reason to doubt that all have become good and useful members of society, though their names may be unknown to fame.

In reply to your request for fuller information about the school referred to in my last letter, I send the few following notes.

The school in question was a small one, the number of pupils, belonging to the wealthy class, averaging about 30, varying in age from 10 to 17. The standard of the various classes was fairly high, though in Classics we did not go beyond Horace, Ovid, Virgil, Sallust, Homer, and Xenophon. The subjects were English, Geography, History, Arithmetic, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry (Practical and Theoretical), Latin, Greek, French, German, and Drawing. In some of these subjects we had weekly examinations, in others terminal; the examinations were in all cases conducted by those who had taught the various subjects, and may be considered as true tests of the instruction that had been given. The papers were examined and marked very rigidly, besides being carefully gone through with the pupils. I believe the pupils themselves thought they ought always to get full marks; I know

they considered anything less than 84 per cent. not worth much. This applies, not to all, but quite to the majority: the classes had tails, but by no means bad ones. I still have copies of the examination marks and reports of all the masters, and in turning them over I find some pupils getting full marks, and numerous entries ranging between 80 and 100 per cent. These examinations were the only, and a very faint approach to a reward of any sort for any subject throughout the school. Punishments were entirely unknown. The pupils were taught to do what was right because it *was* right, and I remember only one or two instances in which this incentive seemed hardly sufficient, but even in these it prevailed in time. All connected with the school looked at teaching in a higher light than the mere hearing of lessons, and I think I may say we were all—teachers and learners—earnest in our work, and did our best to be thorough.

\* MR. A. SILVA WHITE.

The subject of geography offers, I think, a striking example of how education is sacrificed to examination. As a subject for examination it does not "pay," hence its neglect; hence, also, the ignorance displayed by our legislators, and the corresponding danger to the State.

\* MRS. RICHMOND.

Experience is indeed teaching us the futility of the old idea that cultivation of the brain would transform us into a moral and well-behaved nation, full of sweetness and light. \* \* \* \* \* At that impressionable time of life which young people pass in school, the teaching of example is more especially powerful, and the future character of the man or woman will reflect, more or less, that of their teachers. \* \* \* \* \* Teachers must be taught to teach, and not selected only for their power of passing an examination. They need many valuable qualities of heart and mind,—above all patience, firmness, and loving sympathy with the young, with a deep appreciation of the true objects of education. These are rare gifts; unfortunately many a clever brain worker who may have passed high examinations, is utterly deficient in the qualities which make a good instructor.

\* MISS BEALE, PRINCIPAL OF LADIES' COLLEGE, CHELTENHAM.

*Extracted from an Article on Education.*

✓ I know of no school which does not offer bribes to clever boys, nor any college that does not offer them to young men. And why this great expenditure? Is it for pure benevolence—for the good of the pupil himself? Surely none can deny that, often at least, the primary object is not the good of the pupil, but of the school or college—which seeks to establish a reputation by securing exceptional talent, or by appropriating other men's labours. \* \* \* \* It seems to me that such scholarships are neither more nor less than bribes to parents to consider *not* what is intrinsically the best place of education, but to send their boys or girls to special places. The effect must be to depress those who would rather fail than succeed by such means, and to draw pupils to institutions which offer bribes. \* \* \* \* Yet educational monopolies on a large scale are maintained, and with what evil results those familiar with the Blue Books of the Schools Inquiry Commission well know. They read there how bad schools were maintained, and boys' lives wasted, through a shortsighted grasping at scholarships on the part of foolish parents; and I have heard recently of a school, acknowledged to be bad, which is kept full because the pupils get board, I believe partial clothing, and something called Education, for a very small sum. \* \* \* The system I complain of appears to be rapidly growing in girls' colleges. \* \* \* \* Who can tell, when the golden age returns, whether it may not be considered disgraceful for a school or college to offer bribes to parents; whether in that golden age money payment by results shall not cease, and slave-trade in boys and girls shall not be abolished—that system by which they are purchased for a given number of years, and required to labour at certain tasks, simply for the honour and glory of a particular school—forbidden to consider what will develop their own nature, or make them most useful in the world, and compelled to fix their attention on what will gain a place in class-lists, on what will pay; when the vision of the little child shall not be ever fixed on the winning of some immediate reward, of the youth on the acquisition of money, of the man on what is now called wealth; but there shall be a joy in the acquisition of knowledge and the development of the inward life, and it shall be felt that wisdom is better than gold, and all the things thou mayst desire are not to be compared unto her?

## \* MR. T. CANNER.

My remarks are made respecting a school with which I am intimately acquainted and where I have a personal knowledge of both teachers and scholars. It contains over 500 children, so that I have had ample scope and opportunity for observing the great disadvantages of the present system of examination.

(a) The children and teachers are continually working under a nervous strain and excitement. As the time for examination approaches, they are in many cases unfit to attend, and consequently cannot do themselves justice.

(b) The multiplicity of examinations prevents the regular and quiet teaching which alone can impart proper and lasting information. In the school to which I refer there are *six* examinations by officials not on the school staff.

(c) Too many subjects are introduced into the syllabus, which prevents a proper amount of time being devoted to the essential subjects of elementary education.

(d) Grants of money for individual examination (called payment by results) is entirely opposed to true education, as it only creates a spirit of cramming instead of a true study of the subject.

(e) The present system of individual examination adopted by H.M. Inspectors is a serious hindrance to education. The intelligent and bright children are kept back, while the weaker and less intelligent are forced beyond their natural power and ability.

Head teachers should have the power of classifying their scholars according to their ability, and not according to age.

MICHAEL FOSTER, M.A., M.D., LL.D., F.R.S.

*Extracted from Introductory Sessional Address delivered at the School of Pharmacy, Oct. 6, 1883.*

We have no doubt that A is cleverer in passing an examination than B, and in all probability A will in future life be a better man, and prove a more real man than B. But that is not always the case; the examinations often fail us in that respect. Again and again I have known men whom I have been obliged to speak of as good examination men, who did not prove of great value in after life; again and again I have known men, who have not done well in the examination room, who have been of enormous value in after

years. And then modern refinements have increased our difficulties.  
\* \* \* \* \* Now, Sir, whenever an examination is instituted in order to select the fit persons for this or that, there always arise a certain number of people who undertake to put a lad through that examination, whether he be fit or not. There are certain names given to these persons; they are sometimes called "coaches," they are sometimes called "crammers," but the name of "coach" seems to me very significant. We have an idea that the prize in an examination is given because in the race the lad arrives at the goal by the exercise of his own limbs, and that his speedy arrival at the goal is a test of the soundness of his mind and the strength of his limbs. But a "coach" takes him on his back and lands him there; it is at his expense he is carried there, and his arrival there is a token not so much of the lad's ability, but of the "coach's" skill. I speak this advisedly, because I have had some experience of "coaches." I quite admit there are some "coaches" who gain their end by real teaching, but they have deserted their clan, they are no longer "coaches," but teachers. But all are not so, and in my experience as an examiner, I have been brought to the conclusion that "coaching" has now-a-days achieved the position of a fine art, that it is an occupation of life into which a great deal of energy is directed. As far as I understand, the "coach" when he takes to "coaching" pupils does not consider in the first place the nature of the study, but what he is pleased to call "the examiner's mind." He makes a study first of all of the examiners. He knows their whims; he knows their fancies; he learns what answers will, if I may say so in the presence of others who are like myself examiners, tickle them most, and he directs his efforts accordingly. Indeed, Sir, I understand that some of these "coaches," who have a large number of pupils take on them the functions of a general. They marshal their forces, and I know very well that in one examination where the *viva voce* is of some importance, a "coach" has been in the habit of sending his weak, hopeless pupils in first to know what the style of the questions was in order that the hopeful pupils might benefit by the knowledge. \* \* \* \* \* I am inclined to regard that examination as the worst where a lad after two or three years' study on a variety of subjects, is examined in all of them in the shortest space of time. For instance, in a certain university, the subjects are so many that, as a poor, disappointed, despairing student said to me, preparing for this examination is like driving a lot a

pigs. You have no sooner got hold of one subject than the others are all abroad. The worst examination seems to me to be that in which a lad brings up a number of subjects, after a somewhat lengthy preparation, before a group of strange men, of whom he knows nothing, and who know nothing of him, and before whom, to the best of his ability, he there disgorges, if I may use the phrase, his knowledge in a few hours. I do not believe that that examination is one just either to the student, or, if I may say so, to the examiner. The best examination seems to me that kind of one which is carried out in a partial manner in the School of Science at South Kensington, and which, if fully developed, takes on somewhat of this form, that a lad having to study two, three, or four subjects does not attempt to drive them, so to speak all abreast, but takes one, or at most two, and devotes his whole attention to that one or at most two. Then as he attends the lecture, and especially as he carries out the practical work belonging to the lecture, a note is now and again taken by the teacher of the progress which he makes, and any doubt which the teacher may have is remedied by frequent informal examinations. At the end of the course there is a formal examination undertaken by the reader, or if you please, by the teacher with the help of an assessor, in order that things may be straight and square and above-board. But I am one of those who think that no one can judge of a lad's progress like the man who has actually taught him, the more formal examination becoming, as it were, the crown of the three or four or six months' work, and the position which he gains in that subject should go as much to his credit for his final degree or certificate. Then he would turn with a full heart and free mind to another subject, and treat that in the same thorough, honest, and straightforward way. That I believe would be a kind of examination against which a coach of the utmost ability would have no power whatever. But, you will say, it would assume the form of compulsory lectures. Now, in politics, and in the general conduct of life, I am opposed to compulsion. I am one of those who believe that the art of government consists in developing the free tendencies of the people, and not in manufacturing unnecessary restrictions; that the progress of government consists in the diminution rather than the increase of laws, and that the ideal government is that which in the end finds nothing to do. I am opposed to compulsion; but I venture to think that this course which I have sketched out to you would not be a series of compulsory

lectures. For I am as opposed as possible to mere compulsory lectures. I cannot, and never could see the good of making a lad sit in the back benches and read a novel, or carve his name on the desk, while the lecturer is doing his best to open up to him grand views of the science which he is teaching.

ARCHDEACON S. CHEETHAM, ROCHESTER.

The matter is a very serious one, and, to speak generally, I am opposed to the multiplication of examinations, especially in the case of children of tender years. But what is to be done? If (*e. g.*) scholarships at Eton and Winchester are not to be given for merit, what can we do but fall back on the nomination system? And how can mental power and attainments be discovered except by examination? You would abolish them; but I am quite sure that the abolition of such scholarships would materially increase the difficulty which clever sons of impecunious parents experience in finding their way to the front. And the same may be said of scholarships at the Universities; and I am disposed to think that at the great schools, where there is not too much "grind," the juvenile scholars soon recover from the effects of their early forcing.

And with regard to primary schools. I have been a school manager for many years, and am far from satisfied with our primary education. Our infant schools are often excellent, but in boys' and girls' schools there is generally too much unprofitable "grind." "Payment for results" is an abominable system, because the "results" which we really desire—the fitting boys and girls to discharge their duties in life honestly and intelligently—cannot be tested by examination; but then, how can they be tested, except by the experience of life itself? If grants are to be given, either from local or national funds, it seems to me that they must be given in accordance with results which can be tested, and so the examination system, in some form, almost inevitably comes in.

With regard to Army, Navy, and Civil Service Appointments, it seems to me that the nomination system, with a qualifying examination, really is the best, if—a large question—we can find men to nominate honestly. In all these cases, we want qualities which can be very imperfectly tested by examination.

I am told that the examination evil is much less virulent in Germany than with us, and their education is certainly better.

Perhaps we might get some hints from the Germans. I confess the methods suggested in the Protest seem to me inadequate.

To "read up" for an examination is not a noble motive, and perhaps the process may even be injurious to the few souls who are really smitten with the desire to know. But we have to deal with the many. And it must not be forgotten that, after all, examinations are the great securities against "half-baked" knowledge. Moreover, it seems to me that a good many who have begun to work with the lower aim of succeeding in an examination, have ended by working from a desire to know.

All this does not prevent my thinking that there are serious evils in our present system of examinations and of education generally; but you will see that I am not sufficiently at one with the general tenor of the Protest to add my name to the signatures.

\* MR. S. M. CROSBIE.

*The Evil of Payment by Results in Elementary Schools.*—It is only natural to think that a certain proportion of children must fall behind in the race each year through sickness or other causes. In order to minimise this, and indeed to overcome it if possible, teachers are compelled to drive—by keeping in or by other means—and so step in those physical evils referred to in the Protest.

1.—*Evil to the Teachers.*—The number of teachers that "break down" is so great that "supply teachers" have been appointed in large towns. Liverpool has more than its share of these "supply teachers." My own experience is that teachers, especially head-mistresses, have days and sometimes weeks of illness through this over-pressure and the anxiety consequent upon their endeavours to produce the highest results. If called upon, I can give names of ladies who have broken down in this way in Liverpool. There is another evil to teachers that I have not seen mentioned. It may be called by some a lesser evil, but in my opinion it has far-reaching effects. I refer to the inability of many teachers to keep up their own private studies in literature, science, or language. Then we are accused of being deficient in culture. In the teaching profession the wear and tear of the brain is so great that it loses its elasticity to an alarming extent. Teachers are thus easy preys to irritability, which is not conducive to the happy school life of the children.

■



*Evil to Scholars.*—If you enter any public elementary school after the Government examination you will find row after row of white-faced children. This will be more pronounced where “keeping in” has been carried on to any great extent. In a certain school, said to be the best girls’ school in Liverpool by H.M.’s Inspector, this “keeping in” is begun soon after the examination and is carried on persistently throughout the year. In this same school 69 girls out of a class of 72 were caned the other day for getting a sum wrong. It is no wonder then that children become sleepless and sick, or that those parents who can afford to do so take their children away and send them to private schools.

As the examination draws near many children become quite dull, although sharp enough at the earlier part of the year. I have noticed, too, that the classes become very lifeless and unresponding towards the latter part of the afternoon. Therefore I try to get the heavier part of my work done in the earlier portions of the day.

Every year towards examination time we have two or three children breaking down through this over-pressure. This, I think, is the experience of *every* elementary school. I have a case now of a boy who has been ill with scarlet fever for a few weeks. Of course he got behind all the others in his work, but so anxious is he to get on in his class and not lose a Standard that he gets a companion to show him his work at home. If he were my son, I should send him out to play instead, in order that he might fully regain his strength.

*Intellectual Evils.*—The present system of elementary school examination might be called the levelling system. Every brain is expected to do the same work and reach the same Standard, whatever may be its capacity. There is thus little room for individual cleverness, or for the development of individual cleverness in any one subject. Some children take to one subject more readily than to another, and in my opinion they ought to be encouraged to continue their favourite study. Little of that is done now-a-days. In like manner, teachers are expected to be equally clever at teaching all subjects—a great hardship in many cases.

Another intellectual evil is the rapid forgetfulness of what is learnt. This is also mentioned in the Protest. Every teacher knows that the great majority of children would fail at the Government examination if they were examined in the work of a lower Standard. This shows that there is little of true “building up,” which alone is education.

Every examiner has his own fads, and expects teachers and scholars to have looked at the subject from his standpoint. This is sometimes calamitous—especially when the Inspector asks only a few questions in any subject.

*Plan Proposed.*—In my opinion the teachers ought to examine the children in the presence of the examiner, who could soon detect the style of teaching that had been followed, as well as measure the standard of the teacher. The examiner might thereafter supplement this with questions of his own.

Let examiners be appointed for groups of schools or for smaller districts than at present. Let them visit the schools month after month, or more or less frequently if necessary. The work would then go on steadily without this terrible *one-day ordeal* which is dreaded alike by teachers and scholars.

\* PROFESSOR H. A. STRONG.

Briefly speaking I may say that in my opinion the students are set far too many subjects at the Universities of London and Victoria ever to get any good out of any of them. The consequence of this is, that the students, boys and girls alike, who are subjected to this system, grow up with no real knowledge of any subject, and when they come to my classes the only anxiety which they display is to get "tips" for a definite book. It would be far better if the students were encouraged, while at the Universities, to study one or two subjects well than to smatter at so many. What the results may be in other subjects I know not; but in Latin, my own subject, and in German, the standard is extremely low, and I only wonder that the London University can make such ill-advised regulations. We reduced the number of subjects in Melbourne, and the effect was certainly beneficial. You would be surprised to see how ignorant the majority of these students are who have taken a pass degree in either of these Universities. The students have worked hard and conscientiously; the teachers have taught in the same way; but the fact remains that the spirit is taken out of both of them by the horrid system. As far as the Civil Service goes, the true way to remedy the evil I believe to be to permit the different Universities to nominate for appointments like the Indian Civil Service; or to a large proportion of such posts; and to permit these to choose with reference to capacity all round. The physique of

our town students seems lamentably deficient ; towns are increasing, and we have no compulsory service or drill of any kind, as they have abroad, to remedy this defect. Medical testimony seems pretty unanimous that my view of the want of physique is correct ; of course the opinion of professional coaches is all the other way. I send you a copy of our magazine containing my address and that of a much greater man, Mr. Edgar Browne, the son of "Phiz," which may give you some aid. It is a *material* and *physical* degeneration of our race that I fear ; we have magnificent material ; but our young colonial students could beat these poor townsmen in every point. I am Professor of Latin here, and President of a Teachers' Guild (the largest in Great Britain).

\* MISS ANNA BUCKLAND.

As regards the education of girls, I acknowledge the importance of outside examinations, because every teacher needs some test of the completeness and efficiency of her work ; but I feel most strongly the shallowness of an education which is conducted with a view to successful examination, and I believe that for women it is a most serious hindrance to their best and highest development.

I should like to draw your attention to the fallacy of the test for the efficiency of a teacher, which is supposed to be secured by the holding of a Higher Local Certificate. These can be obtained through "coaching" by correspondence in the known lines of the examination ; and a pass in *two* subjects (besides arithmetic) gains the certificate. By means of these limited certificates a number of half educated women, with no real culture and little intellectual development, are getting into their hands a large share of the education of girls, both in schools and families ; and they narrow their teaching again to the grooves of examinations. I should like to add that my own experience of some years in the intellectual education of girls is decidedly in favour of mental exercise, as having a most beneficial effect on the general health of girls. It seems to me to be even more necessary than physical, which is somewhat in danger just now of being overdone. I do not know any case in which a girl has suffered from intellectual development, and I have seen many in which physical energy has followed on the waking of the mind to life, and the use of drugs and tonics have been laid aside. There are girls, no doubt, who become exhausted after the over-

stimulus of a public examination ; but that is through prolonged excitement and strain during the preparation and the days of examination. I cannot say that I have often found girls unable to stand this ; but I believe that for all girls intellectual study is a healthy bracing pursuit, when its higher ends only are kept in views.

“ONE WHO HAS FAILED,” TO HIS UNCLE.

I hope I shall have better luck next time. I quite agree with you\* that the best way to work for an exam. is to get papers set by masters. We try and get hold of all the old examination papers that have been set and work them up.

Cramming is very uninteresting, as the masters and pupils never set about working at a subject with the intention of thoroughly mastering it, but simply to pick out the things that are likely to be asked. This is a great art, and it is wonderful to see what good shots sometimes a really experienced master will make.

MR. R. D. ARCHER HIND, M.A., TRIN. COLL., CAMBRIDGE.

Although I am unable to sign the paper, I very cordially sympathise with the end you have in view, which I take to be the deliverance of study from the incubus of examinations.

MR. H. CANDLER, ASSISTANT MASTER, UPPINGHAM.

I am very well persuaded (i) that education suffers greatly from over-examination, (ii) that too early examinations for scholarships press disastrously on young boys in many cases, (iii) that all forms of emulation are a poor incentive to noble work, (iv) that the best examinees are often not the best men. If that ended the matter I would sign the Protest with the greatest satisfaction. But, as a practical schoolmaster, I must see what is going to replace the present system, and you offer no hints to help me. I must confess that I have not skill enough to perceive any fundamental remedy that is not worse than the disease. I myself am very grateful for the aid scholarships afforded me as a poor hard working student,

\* The Uncle adds a note—“ You see the immoral advice uncles are now compelled to give their nephews.”

so that I could go to the University and get the best education in the land, and gain the social advantages that would have been otherwise restricted to the wealthy and leisured classes. \* \* \*

I should question if such theoretic assent as schoolmasters would give could be easily made to square with their sense of the hard facts of the situation.

\* REV. J. MARTINEAU, D.D.

I gladly bear my testimony to the evils of a system which is already lowering the intellect and character of a second generation of "educated" Englishmen.

\* PROFESSOR F. W. NEWMAN.

I am not aware that I differ from any part of the Protest. I add further corroborations from my own view.

1. The examinations drive ushers of schools against their will to neglect boys of less talent, and give all their effort to the cleverer, who ought rather to be stimulated to unassisted study.

2. In my own experience at University College, London, I believe I was not alone among the Professors in thinking the prizes thrown away.

3. The whole system of marks giving numerical value to the pupils' written papers, I believe to be fundamentally delusive, and I know that to have to frame them every week is a torment and waste of brain to young teachers.

THE EARL OF PEMBROKE.

I have got nothing to say to the world worth hearing on the subject of examinations. If we are to stick to competition, I would give marks for physical excellences in all brain competitions.

I should prefer to see pass examinations, and the candidates afterwards selected by lot.

THE EARL OF ROSEBURY.

I am deeply impressed with the fact that we lose many excellent and obtain many useless men by competitive examination, universally applied.

## \* MRS. BULLAR.

Mrs. Bullar wishes to add her name to the Protest against competitive examinations, and the danger and mischief of over teaching delicate and clever children. She feels the very great advantage of strengthening the bodily health first, to secure mental and moral strength in after years. Mrs. Bullar has seen the mischief of the first, and the good results of the last in her own experience, and therefore willingly adds her name.

## \* MISS GILLETT.

Public opinion drives principals to adopt the system against their own better judgment. The work becomes a toil instead of a pleasure, for no time can be spared on enjoyment of a study, and the end of each term finds children and teachers thoroughly fagged, and sick of the monotonous grind.

## MRS. FAWCETT.

I do not think so badly of examinations, or believe them to be so demoralising as you do ; and besides, I do not see what could be substituted for them which would not provoke greater evils. I do not think that young men and women who work for examinations look upon the purpose and meaning of education as consisting of the winning of money, or the gaining of a particular place. It is too long a subject to write about ; but I have formed my opinion on the subject by carefully watching the effects of examinations, and watching for them in a few very dissimilar characters, and I believe some of the moral effects of examinations to be very valuable, especially in the way in which they develop self-control, and powers of concentration, and avoidance of slovenliness.

## “ M.D.”

Examinations and prizes may be bad for those whom you credit with a possible love of study for its own sake ; but there is no doubt that they are fatal to the numerous boys of mean abilities, who, knowing that they can't get rewards, don't try to do anything.

The same class of boys suffer, too, from the neglect of their tutors, who, hoping nothing from them, concentrate their efforts upon the boys likely to add to their own reputation.

## \* LADY TAYLOR.

I only wish for the sake of the cause my signature was worth more than it is. I was tempted to sign as six persons instead of one, as my kind godfathers and mothers endowed me with six Christian names (and only one coral necklace!). I think the present system is not only torture to the victims, but does not supply the public with the best materials. I know my husband\* thought this, and I often heard him say that had it prevailed in the year 1824 he would never have got into the Colonial Office, and you know what he was there for 50 years.

## MR. BENJAMIN JONES, CO-OPERATIVE WHOLESALE SOCIETY.

I have carefully read the Protest *re* examinations, and, while agreeing with you that there is overstraining and cramming, and perhaps other evils, I think that the sum total of evils is less than the sum total of the evils that have been abolished to a large extent through examinations. I should, therefore, prefer that means should be adopted to regulate and improve examinations, and vary them, than abolish them.

## REV. H. LATHAM, MASTER OF TRINITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE.

I agree with the writer of this paper that the system of open competition for scholarships, especially those given at schools has an injurious effect both on the teacher and the pupil. I also regret the employment of competition for the Army and the Civil Service; though I know that party government renders the distribution of patronage by other methods liable to abuse.

At the same time I regard examinations in connection with a regular system of instruction as very useful, both as forcing the pupil to get habits of accuracy, and as accustoming him to express his knowledge concisely.

## \* MR. E. FORDHAM.

I think that the Services might be supplied by special schools admitting the boys at 14, the admission being regulated by selection. There is no harm done if a boy is disappointed in getting in at that age. There are signs which point to the Public Services being better paid than the other occupations of men. I think they are, and would gladly see a reduction of 10 per cent. or more.

\*The late Sir H. Taylor.

## \* A TEACHER IN A LARGE PROVINCIAL MEDICAL SCHOOL.

I am fully in agreement with the Protest.

It is curious, but significant, that some of the points touched on are being strongly felt in many ways, independently of the general questions,—*e.g.*, the Medical Board, of which I am a member, have had under serious consideration lately the harm done to medical students by the tendency on the part of the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons of London to split up the examinations for their diplomas into pieces, so to speak; thereby increasing the number of examinations, and compelling provincial students to be paying frequent visits to London, a condition of things which of course may in many ways be detrimental to continuous quiet study.

They seem to be constantly in the examinational mill, having either just recovered from the last squeeze, or else thinking of the next one.

A very intelligent student remarked to me lately: "I shall be "thankful when I get this last exam. over, for then I shall be free "to *really learn* my profession."

## MR. HERBERT FISHER.

You will think me the most impracticable of men, but though I have railed I daresay as much as most against the tyranny of examinations, I am unable to subscribe to either of the papers. I cannot, looking at the whole question, subscribe to the governing proposition that education is being sacrificed to examination. You have in the paper no doubt exhibited in a very telling manner all the weak points of the examination system, but the question is whether, conceding these, it does not on the whole work better than any system which can be substituted for it. You will no doubt find cases of boys who have been over-strained by preparation for scholarships, but I believe the per centage to be very small. But this is a point to be decided by evidence, which it would not be difficult to obtain. You will find, on the other hand, that in those schools which profess to aim at a scholarship standard there is a general high level of teaching, and an interest in intellectual distinction which would not otherwise be found, and which permeates the whole school. It must be remembered that, comparatively speaking, but few are candidates for these prizes, that no one need be a candidate unless his parents choose, and as to the motive for



working for a scholarship, which appears to you to be so sordid.\* I cannot agree, for I think that a boy who works hard in order to procure for himself the means of going to a better school than would otherwise be open to him, and to relieve his father of some of the expense of his education, is working with the highest possible motive. Moreover, if the interest which is created by competition for public distinctions of this kind is knocked on the head, athletic distinctions will positively have the whole field to themselves. I think, as regards these little boys, that the system has to be carefully watched. I have, I think, seen questions set which struck me as objectionable, and no doubt one has to trust to an alarming extent to the good sense and experience of examiners in the leading schools, for the harm that one injudicious paper may do is very great. Still between the old system of patronage and that of unrestricted examinations, I can see no *via media*, unless some steps are taken to keep out rich parents, who are too apt to intrude their boys into those scholarships with all the advantages which wealth has given in the preparation for them, but this would not affect the general question upon which you have started, but introduces quite another element.

I cannot think that the idea of two sets of schools, one for the sordid who can only be induced to work for scholarships, and another for the elect who are to work from higher motives is practicable or desirable. The assumed evil would only be concentrated and intensified in a few schools, and the others, I am afraid, would have a greater number of idle boys than of votaries of Truth for its own sake.

When one comes to the Universities one is confronted with examinations again, though they are not numerous unless a man chooses to make them so. And it must be remembered that after the small modicum which is required for a pass in "Smalls" and "Mods." has been satisfied, a man may choose almost any subject. Surely it is to be assumed that the University is capable of prescribing the course of reading which is best calculated to lay a solid foundation in each of the subjects, for which there are final schools; and, if so, I don't know how proficiency in these subjects is to be tested, and to meet with its legitimate reward (if reward is desired) except by examination.

\* The Protest said, "motives, which, except for the desperate effort of the moment, must be poor and unfruitful."—A. H.

It does seem absurd that men of twenty-six, candidates, say, for a clerkship in the Treasury, should be set down to write Greek Iambics and the like, but here again we are met with the old alternative, patronage or competition; and if competition, a competitive examination in the work of the past life is probably more innocuous than one in fresh subjects, which would be crammed up for the occasion. I think, too, that a very considerable latitude exists in the subjects for the Civil Service examinations.

\* MR. H. D. MACLEOD.

As you have asked me for a short statement bearing on the sacrifice of education to examination, I will simply say what is within my own knowledge.

One of the subjects, and a most important one, in the Civil Service Examinations for the selected candidates for the Civil Service of India, is political economy or economies, as it is becoming more usually called. I can state from my own personal knowledge that the books recommended by the Civil Service Commissioners, whatever good they may have done in former times, are utterly unsuitable for the present state of the subject. I can also state that the strongest representations on the subject have been made to the Commissioners by several very high officials connected with the administration of India, and others, supported by the testimony of twenty-five judges. To all these representations the Commissioners reply that "they are not in any way bound to inquire into the truth of the books they recommended as long as they are used in the Universities." I have no hesitation in saying that the examination in economies conducted by the Commissioners and in the Universities are perfectly worthless, because they are founded on books which are as utterly unsuitable for the present state of economies, as the mathematics and physics of the seventeenth century are unfit for the mathematics and the physics of the present day. Students are compelled to read books whose errors have been over and over again pointed out, and they are debarred from the knowledge of the truth which is now adopted by all the most eminent economists on the Continent of Europe and in America. Is it possible to conceive a more striking case of the sacrifice of education to examination?

## \* REV. A. JENNINGS.

I comply with your request that I should express in a few sentences my sentiments on this subject. A large experience as examinee and examiner convinces me that education is being sacrificed to a Procrustean system mainly beneficial to the widely ramified pædagogic interest. Seemingly most people are coming to the same conclusion. May I touch here on certain aspects of the question, hitherto little noticed? (1) *The moral result.* 'Αιέν ἀπιστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων is a poor educational principle, and Heaven lies not about an infancy limed with "entrance scholarships." The prize boy trained to play for his own hand develops into the man of imperfect sympathies and ungenial habits. Much of the unloveliness proverbially attaching to the University "don" is, I think, attributable to such training. (2) *The result to learning.* Suppose all possible prizes secured. Is the product of the examination mill a man devoted to scholarship or science, or only a surfeited "pot-hunter?" It is an old complaint that our Universities turn out so little in the way of original work. The competitive system with its unnatural incentives largely accounts for their barrenness. Our competitive stars sink into mere examiners, lecturers, and school-masters. "Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers." (3) *Fairness of the test.* The prevalent system is a good winnowing fan. But it is not a spring balance. It is a perfect machine for a pass, but not (except in case of exact science) for a graduated class. The "ploughed," I think, usually deserve their fate; not so the "placed." Marking "by impression" and allotting separate marks to each question will sometimes yield singularly divergent results. Equally instructive is a temporarily mislaid mark-list causing re-examination of papers and double results. So, too, interchange of papers by examiners.

## \* MR. J. LANDON.

I should be glad to add my name as protesting against the undue influence of examinations upon education at the present time. The blame, as it appears to me, does not rest with the examiners, but with the system, which has led to mere examination results being taken as almost the only test of success in teaching. This further puts the wrong object before the student, and in many cases what he cares for is the "pass," and not either the discipline gained or the knowledge obtained.

When the sole aim is the securing of a good place in the examination list, both the student and the teacher naturally look to the shortest and easiest method of obtaining the desired result, and this is surely *not the method of any true teacher*. The work of the "coach" and of the teacher should be essentially different. True teaching involves real study—not mere memory work and industry, but thought and reason. The really valuable teaching processes, although productive of lasting good results, are too slow to win a high place in the race for examination places and per centages; and it becomes year by year increasingly difficult to get students to realise the importance of the method and thoroughness of their work.

\* MR. HENNIKER HEATON, M.P.

Since bodily harm is the outcome of all over-pressure, it seems to me that generally speaking it is to careful physical education that we must look for the remedy. There should be, I think, more regular physical tests, as gymnastic training, etc., in every school. There a register of physical measurements should be kept. This is done in every military gymnasium. But in what school do they think of testing the physical growth of children? Where do they take the trouble to see if their muscular development, their growth and weight are up to the standard? It is appalling to witness the multitude of children now being trained to live on their wits. The strain on the nervous system is very great.

\* MR. P. GERALD SANFORD.

I consider examinations to be very injurious for many reasons; among others I may particularize the following:—

1st. Because it is not always the best men who pass them, but those who are best able to acquire the knack of answering printed questions, and who have discovered the idiosyncrasies of the examiners.

2nd. Because I believe the process of gaining knowledge to be the work of years of study and original research, and is not to be gained by reading certain portions of text books.

3rd. Because examinations are made by many the chief end of study, rather than the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake.

4th. Because, in my opinion, it tends to cramp the freedom of thought of the student, and the methods of exposition of the teacher.

5th. Because I attribute the small amount of original work done by many of the professors and senior students in our larger colleges to perpetual preparation for them.

MR. H. L. W. LAWSON, M.P.

With a great deal of the draft Protest against our present educational system, I entirely agree, but I think that there is a wide difference between the order of examinations in our public Elementary Schools, and in the Honour Schools of our Universities. To include them all in one sweeping condemnation seems to me to shoot wide of the mark at which we aim. In the highest examinations at Oxford and Cambridge I believe there is ample room for individuality and self-development, and in certain branches of knowledge the distinctions gained by the younger men have been followed by original research of the most valuable kind. What applies in the one case does not in the other. On the other hand, in the Pass Schools of our Universities you have the general qualifying test of merit, such as is advocated in the Protest, for the public service, and knowing something of the results, I fail to see its advantages. As a member of the Civil Establishments Commission I honestly believe that by the competitive system better men have been secured both for the Higher and Lower Divisions of the Service than ever found their way there before. Under these circumstances I fear I am unable to sign the memorial, though what you say has immense force with regard to the system of examination and education at our Elementary Schools.

HON. G. BRODRICK, WARDEN OF MERTON COLL., OXFORD.

Let me explain in a few words my reasons for not joining in a sweeping protest against the examination system.

Having suffered myself from the effects of over-pressure at an

early age, I am by no means disposed to ignore the danger of it, and I think it is the duty of parents, as well as of teachers, to guard ambitious boys against premature strain of their faculties, by rigorously limiting their hours of work. But is this, after all, the chief risk to youthful constitutions, and is it certain that industrious boys would compare unfavourably with idle boys, in respect of health and strength? I think not, and I believe very instructive statistics might be produced to show that even competitions for the Navy and the foundations of our Public Schools have not on the whole injured the *physique*—while they have certainly improved the morale—of the selected candidates.

As for the Universities, I have the strongest faith in the beneficial effect of examinations; and if it were possible (which it is not) to eliminate the evils of *competitive* examinations, I should regard that effect with almost unqualified satisfaction. Have those who denounce University examinations reflected on the state of things which preceded University examinations? Are they aware that during the last century, when the old mediæval disputations had become obsolete, and had not yet been replaced by the examination system, Oxford—instead of being a Paradise of “original research”—became the byword of Europe for intellectual sterility; that it was completely distanced in the educational race by Cambridge, which had wisely adopted the examination system much earlier, and that it was rescued from intellectual stagnation by the introduction of class lists at the beginning of the present century? Granted that “cram” is an evil, and that some tutors and coaches treat a high place in the class-list as an end in itself, have not hundreds and thousands of young men been fortified against the attractions of pleasure, and allured into a genuine love of learning by the hope of academical distinction? Is it to be assumed that youths come to college with a heaven-born inclination for some particular study, and only anxious to obtain the best possible instruction in it? Is not the guiding and steadying influence of a good examination as valuable for directing the aims of learners, as it is for testing the efficiency of teachers?

But I will not multiply such questions. I will only add that my own experience leads me to uphold examinations as a necessary safeguard against educational imposture, and in the main, as a most salutary incentive to reading, while most of the evils incident to them appear to me quite remediable.

\* T. K. CHAMBERS, M.D.

For more than thirty years I have been watching the influence of examinations upon education, in the department of medicine especially, having been myself a teacher in a medical school, and also an examiner in the same department at the College of Physicians, and at the Universities of Oxford and of Durham, a great many times altogether, and also a Member of the Medical Council of Education. The conclusions at which I have arrived are as follows:

1. That the force capable of being exerted over the school-master by examinations is overwhelming and absolute.

2. That this force has been exerted with many most beneficial results, gradually increasing during the last quarter of a century, and still increasing.

3. That this mighty force requires strict control and limitation.

4. That as at present administered for the general body of men, it has the fatal flaw of being mainly a test of memory, and not of the use of the reason and the senses. It is easy to detect, and to refuse to accept, cram in such examinations as I have had to conduct, but probably impossible in lower elementary subjects.

5. That this cultivation of the memory is injurious to the powers of observation and reasoning. They become atrophied from want of use.

6. That in the examinations for medical diplomas this bad influence is in a great measure checked and limited by the wording of the "Medical Acts," which require that those licensed to practice should be certified to be possessed of the "requisite knowledge AND SKILL" to practice safely. The Medical Council strictly enforce this, and send round independent visitors to see that the examination is fair and "practical." The last word means that the candidate is taken to sick people and desired to give his diagnosis, prognosis, and rationale of treatment in various cases under the eye of the examiner. And he is then publicly questioned *vis à vis*, so as to have an opportunity of showing that the knowledge exhibited in the written papers is not mere cram.

7. I feel sure that the education of skill capable of exercise in the ordinary avocations of life, and the use of the reason, might be enforced by the co-operation of the examiners in arts and abstract sciences. Reading, writing, speaking, observation, classification of abstract ideas, practical logic and ratiocination, notions of number, form, colour, &c., the foundations of law, morals, and conduct, must

come under the cognizance of the examiners, or they will fail to further promote education, and will become as useless as the Chinese Boards.

I confess I think the Protest is too sweeping, though with much of it I heartily agree; and I prefer to sign "the expression of opinion."

REV. A. H. COOKE, M.A., FELLOW OF KING'S COLL., CAMB.

So far as National and Board Schools are concerned, I feel little doubt that the over-pressure is productive of serious harm, and that the system is open to grave objection. But I have no personal knowledge of the subject; I only hear, and read. My own experience has brought me more intimately into contact with the education of the public schools and Universities, and here I have no hesitation in saying, with a frankness I hope you will pardon, that the picture drawn of the evils of the competitive system is exaggerated to an extreme extent. No one familiar with the Cambridge of the present day could possibly draw up or sign such an indictment against University teaching as the "Protest" sets forward. Competitive examinations no doubt have their dark side, but I do not think we shall get on by an "all-round attack," which, if you will let me say so, seems to lose sight of the undoubted value of rivalry and emulation in nearly all intellectual, no less than bodily, efforts.

I trust that you will pardon the freedom with which I have written, for I felt if I wrote at all the only way was to write frankly.

\* MR. E. RENDALL.

I am very glad to have the opportunity to sign the paper which you have forwarded to me. I have long felt that it is a great drawback to English education, that the money which is given for that purpose is used merely to increase the necessary evils of competition by offering scholarships, instead of endowing institutions in such a way as to make the instruction cheaper for all, and, therefore, accessible to a greater number.

Although I cannot go so far as to think that it would be ever possible to dispense with the competitive stimulus in schools, which is the result of prizes, or other honours at the Universities, I think that the kind of commercial spirit, in which parents come to regard



their sons' abilities, is an unmixed evil for boys and masters as well as parents.

This is the direct result of offering scholarships as mere rewards for examination results, apart from any idea of boys' qualification as fit objects for charity.

I have also the same feeling in the matter of the present system of competition for government employment. Experience teaches a master who has to prepare boys for examination, such as Woolwich and Sandhurst, that real intellectual awakening has to be sacrificed to obtaining what parents, perhaps necessarily, require, viz., commercial results.

\* MR. J. S. REDMAYNE.

During my four or five years experience as a teacher, I could not fail to observe that on the whole my best and most intelligent pupils were not those who did the best in examinations.

As a pupil myself I found I most rapidly forgot those subjects I "crammed" for examination. I have a very vivid recollection of obtaining nearly full marks, and being first in a certain examination in Scotch history. The sole preparation for this examination being that I spent the two previous days in reading the index to a text-book on the subject, and hunting up the various topics according to the page given in the index. It was simply an effort of memory, and for about a week my knowledge of Scotch history was perfect. I need hardly say I know nothing of the subject now, and have no particular wish to read it again.

I do not think you could have a better example of the flagrant abuse of examination, than the system adopted by the Society of Chartered Accountants to keep down the numbers of those wishing to enter that profession.

Some years ago it was seen that the business of a public accountant was gradually becoming more and more important and lucrative. Accordingly those already following that profession sought and obtained a charter of incorporation under which they obtained the right to exclude all others from the benefits of their professional status after a certain date, unless those then seeking to join the profession were able to pass a series of qualifying (?) examinations *conducted by themselves*.

These examinations—more especially the first one, have been

made use of simply to keep the profession "select," a number of questions and puzzles being set in subjects quite foreign to the business requirements of an accountant, and the questions themselves being set by a number of persons who have never passed a similar examination themselves.

\* REV. T. TRAVERS SHERLOCK.

The examination system is simply destructive of all the higher mental and moral elements in life. As a Congregationalist Minister I am often requested to prepare my Sunday School Teachers for Sunday School Union examinations and for the examinations in Religious (!) knowledge appointed by our own Congregational Union, but I have always declined to do so. Socialism, Land Nationalisation, etc., are carefully eschewed as subjects of thought by our Union, but examinations in Religious knowledge are pushed ahead. At the college at which I was educated (!), New College, Hampstead, London, the examination system ruins everything. It takes away the self-respect of the students, who are, as it were, watched and examined at every turn. They live in no large atmosphere of trust and are quite unaccustomed to work from love. The professors, of course, suffer in consequence. The growth of their own minds is checked, their hearts, and hardly even their heads, are not in their work. Enthusiasm and originality cannot flourish. Is there any wonder that there are continual disturbances between professors and students? Sometimes the students are turned out, sometimes, perhaps oftener, the professors, and they are in all probability soured and disappointed men for their whole lives in consequence. Of course there is the usual prize-giving system and plenty of scholarships. But these latter are not large enough to enable a man to go abroad and pursue independent study, but only to live more comfortably amongst his fellows, as a sort of model or object of envy. The quick, shallow men get them, men who can easily earn money if they want it, but the deeper natures that are not so pliable and so readily impressible by unworthy *stimuli* suffer, and have the additional indignity of seeing, even in a Theological College, superficiality elevated above them, and their deeper merits quite unrecognised. It takes men years to rub off the injury of such an infected atmosphere. In a college where only those men are

admitted who are believed to have consecrated their lives to Christ, the injury to the spirit must be far worse than in more secular institutions. There is a cry in our body for College Reform, but very few I fancy have any idea where the reform should begin.

\* MR. C. WILLMORE.

While I arrange to meet special requirements, I conduct my school much after the fashion of the good old times, and so, without the fear of examination before my eyes, I am not concerned, in the main, to sow seed that shall forthwith spring up and bear examination fruit.

No doubt in "those good old times" there was a very reprehensible indifference—perhaps in private schools especially. Undoubtedly examinations have done much to alter this; they have induced competition and rendered work imperative. I should think that possibly up to the present, the good that has been done by them is greater than the harm. But now we seem to be landed in a condition of things in which—speaking generally—the power to pass some examination is the be-all and the end-all of education; and so a method of instruction has come into vogue which too much ignores the true object of education.

But what is to be done? We cannot now banish examinations and go back to the old *laissez-aller*, and examinations being there, people must work for them, and do it in the way most likely to secure the object in view—"to pass." Would it be possible to devise some system of examination which should, without any special requirements having been laid down, test the soundness and thoroughness and extent of a boy's knowledge? With the exact scope of the examination known, and the papers of past years at hand, the special trick of coaching instead of educating comes in. Might not a scheme be devised that would obviate this?

I am speaking only of examinations for lads before they have begun to "specialize." When a boy's all-round education (so far, that is, as the schoolmaster is concerned) has been completed—the foundation laid for any future superstructure—(that is what we want to test), and a particular course has been entered on with a view to a profession, evidently special work must be prepared and examined.

## \* MR. E. H. DASENT.

I think much of the examination mania of the present day is due to two reasons. (1) The foolish desire of parents for the prizes and honours which they hold to be the necessary accompaniment of learning ; (2) the fact that an examination is an easy way of keeping masters up to their work, and though that in itself may be desirable, yet, I fancy that the boys often suffer for it by the frequency and unnecessariness of many of their examinations. Examination is a means, not an end, and until that is clearly perceived by all interested in learning, teachers, taught and parents, I am afraid the evil is likely to increase.

## \* REV. ST. J. TYRWHITT.

As to examinations I might add that the early ones at school seem to me particularly mischievous because they are such a temptation to desponding idleness in many young lads who have capacity and might acquire industry, but who are not good beginners. If a boy cannot make running about 10 or 11, he finds himself beaten, and soon gets to think he will always be beaten ; he grows desponding—apathetic or athletic—much the same thing, as far as learning goes. It was so with my own sons, I am sure. But it is easier to see the evil than find any remedy. Of course endowing chairs is all very well for those who are to sit in them, but the competition for them would still be competition, and very grievous in its details. I don't see how you can expect zeal for learning or anything else in our generation. As a rule men and women care for nothing but money and luxury ; and so what kind of aspiration can you expect from girls and boys ? What the public wants is fair distribution of endowments to children, that parents may have more to spend in eating and drinking and the appendages.

## DR. J. GOW, HEAD MASTER OF NOTTINGHAM SCHOOL.

I doubt whether I am able to give a good opinion on examinations, for I made my living by them for many years. I don't object to them as a whole, though I object to the form of many of those most in vogue. I don't object to prizes and scholarships, for I and many of my friends were educated on them ; but I think there are too many of them, and I could give many cases in which a *small* scholarship has proved a most disastrous benefice. I object chiefly

to the *publicity* of the examination system. It has a very bad effect on pupils, but a far worse effect on teachers. The merits of a teacher are gauged by his successes in scholarships, etc.; and he is tempted continually to give unscrupulous advice to boys and parents, with an eye only to his own reputation. Of all the pestilent inventions of the daily press, the *Pall Mall* list of the successes of various schools seems to me the most abominable. I doubt if I am able, or entitled, to give more than such limited opinions as these, and if I were drawing up such a document as the Protest, I think I should begin by sending round a series of questions. \* \* \* \* \*

I am told that in Cambridge there is a growing exasperation against the pressure of examinations, "*quod Di bene vertant.*"

REV. L. R. PHELPS, M.A., FELLOW OF ORIEL COLL., OXFORD.

I regret that, whilst agreeing with much of the memorial which you have forwarded to me on the subject of examinations, I cannot see my way to signing it. I believe that between the ages of 7 and 22 I was never examined less than twice in a year, as a rule in competition. Since 1878 I have been constantly at work with men, who are fresh from examinations, and preparing for them anew. Of late years I have been engaged in teaching the selected candidates for the Indian Civil Service who reside in Oxford, a class of men who are commonly supposed to suffer much from examinations.

In my own case I am strongly of opinion that I owe the work I have done, and any taste which I may have for literature and science very largely to examinations. There may be people who are "to the manner born"; I certainly was not, and I should never have overcome the (to me) distasteful drudgery of early grounding, had it not been for the pressure of competition, embodied in examinations. The same is true of my Oxford course. The attractions of other forms of activity would have prevented me from doing more than a nominal amount of work, had it not been for the necessity of preparing myself to be examined.

The above is my own experience. Of my pupils I would say this much. I am conscious of a very small number of very good men who have been kept back by examinations. I never knew a man who had a real taste for study discouraged, or beyond a very limited extent hindered by them. I have known men obliged to defer the reading of their choice, and in the majority of cases the

discipline has been beneficial. On the other hand, by far the greater number of men have done more work in consequence of examinations, than they would have done without. Many men, I am confident, have acquired a taste for study by preparing themselves to be examined. For we must remember all the dead weight of an English boy's healthy nature and Philistine home. Some stimulus is needed if he is to rise above these surroundings. Competitive examinations are a coarse stimulant, but at present they are the best which we have to hand.

Examinations improve the mass, at the sacrifice, perhaps, of some few of the best. They raise the average at a certain cost of excellence. We must not, however, forget that the very good men gain largely by a high standard around them.

These are some of the results of my experience of examinations. I could say more as to the different effects of different modes of conducting them, but I confine myself to the general question.

\* H. C. HILLIARD, M.D.

Having been for a long time deeply impressed with the harmful results, both physical and mental, of the present system of competitive examinations, and the cramming and forcing mode of education which seems to be a natural outcome of such a system, I have hailed with much satisfaction the Protest which has appeared in the *Nineteenth Century*.

\* PROFESSOR W. M. RAMSAY.

I would gladly add my name to the list of those who think that examination is at present ruinously overdone. At the same time it is true that I use examinations to a very much greater extent than any predecessor or colleague, so far as I know, in this University. I find it impossible to manage the large classes of a Scotch University, and exercise proper supervision over the work of each student without frequent examination. I try to avoid the worst dangers of examination by making the examinations in unseen work (in translations from and into Latin, in identifying the authors of quotations by style and context, etc.) and by introducing the explanation of difficulties that have occurred in the lectures of the preceding week or two. But I am thoroughly in agreement with the principle of the memorialists that true scholarship and learning are at present sacrificed to examination

## \* PROFESSOR SAYCE.

My views as to the character and effects of competitive examinations at Oxford have not changed since the publication of my article upon the subject in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1874. The article was subsequently reprinted in the volume of "Essays on the Endowment of Research," published in 1876. My text was taken from an account of the results of the competitive system upon the Civil Service of India which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*; the conclusions of the writer were confirmed by the evidence given, more especially by the younger members of the Indian Civil Service, and printed in the Blue Book. The general conclusion arrived at was that the competitive system as applied to the Indian Civil Service was a failure. I endeavoured to establish the same conclusion in regard to the competitive system at Oxford and Cambridge.

The abolition of patronage in making official appointments is largely due to a desire on the part of the patrons to escape trouble and responsibility. No one would dream of giving away a really important post by competitive examination; it is only the unimportant and less valuable posts that are left to its decision. The advocates of competitive examination will not employ it when a post in the Cabinet, a Judgeship, or even a Professorship is in question, any more than a banker who wishes to select a confidential clerk, or a body of Governors who have to appoint the Head Master of a school. It is only where no important interests are at stake that competitive examination is resorted to; otherwise appointments by universal consent are still made in this country by patronage. Nothing can show more clearly which is the best method of making official appointments.

It is difficult to suggest what are the best means of testing the work of teachers, since there are various classes of teachers, and various objects for the sake of which teachers are appointed. In some cases Government inspection, in others public opinion, in others again private interest, would seem to be the best test.

If we may judge from the enormous development of athletics in this age of competitive examination, the competitive system does not seem to have been very successful in forcing young persons to work hard with their brains. During the time that I was tutor at Queen's College, at Oxford, I was struck by the ignorance, even of their own language, displayed by the candidates for matriculation, who had been educated at the best schools. On the other hand,

the amount of hard mental work performed by young persons in Germany, where the competitive system scarcely exists, is greatly in excess of that done in England. Indeed the result of the system here is to confine hard study to a few clever youths, whose growing brains are often overworked, and who more often lose all interest in study for its own sake. They come to live for the excitement of an examination, and value knowledge only in so far as it will "pay." It is not a competitive examination, but an examination conducted by a teacher in order to see whether the instruction he has given has been attended to, which will "obtain hard work from young persons" generally. The examination of his pupils by a teacher in the subjects he has been teaching them is the only legitimate form of examination, and is therefore alone likely to produce legitimate results.

Competitive examination tends to hinder rather than assist the children of poor parents. At Oxford and Cambridge scholarships and exhibitions were founded in order to enable poor scholars to enjoy the benefits of a University education. These have now been thrown open to competition. The consequence is that—so far, at all events as classical studies are concerned—only the sons of those who are rich enough to afford their children an expensive education at a public school, or the equivalent of a public school, have any chance of obtaining them. The class which has benefited by the system of competitive examination is the richer middle class, which has by means of it obtained possession of endowments originally intended for the poor. Perhaps this is the main reason which has made the system the idol of the middle classes in England during the last thirty years.

REV. W. SANDAY, DEAN IRELAND'S PROFESSOR OF EXEGESIS,  
OXFORD.

I think that I shall best comply with the wishes of those who have asked for my opinion on the subject of examinations, if I do not travel outside my own experience, but confine myself, in the first instance at least, to what has come within my own observation at the two Universities of Oxford and Durham.

I may sum up my opinion briefly by saying, that I believe that the examination system has reached the extreme limits that are desirable for it, and that future progress should lie rather in the



direction of its curtailment than of its extension. At the same time I should not be prepared for any fundamental change; and I do not believe that the alterations proposed would be found workable. There is one small reform for which public opinion at Oxford seems rapidly ripening and which, so far as it went, would lighten the burden of examinations. I refer to the abolition of *vivd voce* as compulsory alike upon examiners and examined. The cost of labour and time, and, in the case of the candidates, of actual money, seems to me to be out of all proportion to the results obtained. It should, I think, be at the option of examiners to call up for *vivd voce* those candidates whose places they cannot assign without it.

For myself I should be glad to see fewer scholarships and more fellowships. It is questionable whether all the present holders of scholarships are really worth subsidising. I believe that more good would be done by empowering the College authorities to make grants of money to deserving students without examination. I do not think that this would be liable to abuse. The real difficulty in the way is the competition between the colleges.

In like manner as regards fellowships, I believe that they are often best given away without examination. I do not think that a fellowship was ever better employed than that which was given by my own college to Professor W. M. Ramsay for the prosecution of his researches in Asia Minor. The colleges, I believe, are fully alive to what may be done in this direction, but the recent severe depreciation of property restricts many to the providing of their own tuition. As a rule this is done without examination. In regard to the ordinary machinery of Pass and Class, I confess that I do not wish to see any change. We have to deal not with ideal beings but with men as we find them; and most men need some pressure to keep them to work. We English are not by nature a reading people; least of all are we given to systematic reading, and I think that for a man to be at one time in his life constrained or encouraged to read systematically is no evil. I know that cases of break-down occur; but I suspect that the number of these is exaggerated, and that examinations sometimes get the credit of what is really due to other causes, not so much to reading as to spasmodic injudicious reading. For one genuine case in my own experience, I could easily quote ten of men who have read steadily and honestly for an examination, and who would not have read otherwise.

So far as men are concerned there are many correctives to the

mischief of examinations. Both in schools and at the Universities the examination fallacy—if I may call it so—is sufficiently seen through; boys and men are really judged to a large extent by other standards; and for the most part they do not take examinations too seriously. It is different with girls and women; and I confess that I look upon the extension to them of the examination system with some misgiving. I only hope that the heads of their schools and colleges will have their eyes open, and that they will guard against the risks which they incur as much as possible. A healthy public opinion and wise administration will keep examinations in their proper place.

\* MR. THOMAS LEE.

I should like to say, from an experience of several years on the Managing Committee of the oldest—and still one of the largest—Board Schools in Liverpool, that the preparation for the annual Government examinations imposes upon the children a stress and strain injurious both to their physical and mental condition. Of course in State-aided schools Government ought to be satisfied, before the grants are made, that education is efficient, while rate-payers who are taxed to support Board Schools ought to have the same assurance. But this knowledge might be obtained more simply, with less cumbrous routine, and with far less harassing both to teachers and scholars, as well as at much less cost to the country.

An experienced Board School Head Master of my acquaintance thinks the Government examinations would be more successful and less arduous for all concerned, if the Inspectors, instead of coming to the schools at a fixed time, were to make visitations at any time without previous notification, and test the method and work as they actually found them. For my own part I believe there is hardly any necessity for a Government examiner for schools which are under the control of Boards such as that of Liverpool. The Board have an Inspector for themselves whose business it is to go round the schools, holding examinations, and reporting periodically to the Board. The strong and weak points of teaching, and the methods best adapted to the particular neighbourhoods and classes of children are thus more accurately ascertained than they can be during the brief visit and anxious ordeal of a Government examination. It may be objected that a local official would be liable to local

influences or prejudices ; but of course care must be taken to select not only the most competent but the most independent for such a position. And this could be done, and his salary might be partly paid by the Government.

The objection mentioned in one of last month's articles that uniform teaching is apt to repress individuality, and ignore aptitudes for special studies, may hold against higher grade schools, but it hardly applies to Elementary Schools, because scarcely anything is there taught except what every boy and girl should know. French is only just being introduced, and the lessons in Science are of the simplest and most elementary character.

In elementary schools we want perfect supervision of educational methods and results, but less red tapeism. Teachers are worried and perplexed by the multitude of things they have to do and to avoid—in order to keep the Code,—and managers have often to rebel against mechanical and trivial conditions being imposed by the School Boards, which make it difficult to work the schools for their real purpose, that of education.

\* X. Y.

My disapproval of this system—of course only when carried to an excess, as is so common now-a-days—is based on my own experience in various capacities.

1. Both at school and at the University I have been remarkably successful at examinations, having acquired the knack of making the most of my (too often) scanty knowledge. Hence, I feel very deeply how hollow and deceitful the system is, for I have beaten repeatedly men whom I *know* (and knew then) to be far better men than myself. I happened to be able to write quickly and to get up subjects speedily—hence my success. I count my true education to have begun after the time of my competitive examinations was over.

2. For some time I acted as tutor at my College and elsewhere, but gave up the work on finding that one was practically bound down by a hard and fast rule not to lecture on anything that did not “pay” directly for examinations. I tried once or twice lectures on unusual subjects and got but few men. These had brains, and took an interest in the subject, but when the examination came on they invariably found themselves in a class far lower than that in which the regular competition men were placed. Hence I gave the work up in disgust.

3. As Examiner (twice) in one of the Pass Schools, I was struck by the absurdity of the whole thing. A dull man who knew his subject, but could not readily produce his knowledge, often barely passed, when a superficial quick writer generally did, and this, though the examination was only a qualifying one, *not* a competitive one.

4. As Manager in a Voluntary School in a very poor parish, the folly of payment by examination has been strongly borne in upon me. This, partly in the case of the children, but largely in the case of the unfortunate teachers who have to force all types of children and minds into a uniform dead level system. Qualifying examinations are of course more or less necessary; competitive ones destroy all possibility of true education, and grind down and deaden the energies of teachers and learners. For some time a re-action against competitive examinations has been growing up in this University; and I hope the memorial which calls attention to the evil, will aid in putting an end to it. I feel strongly on the matter, which must serve as my excuse for writing at such length. I prefer Professor Freeman's scheme among those which are sketched in this morning's paper.

\* PROFESSOR S. R. GARDINER.

I have read the Protest, and am entirely of one mind with you about the present system of many of our examinations, especially with respect to young boys entering school and passing on from school to college. But I doubt very much whether it is desirable to suppress them in the wholesale way which you propose. I think they serve not only to enable a teacher to test his work, but to enable the learner to give that definiteness to his study which prevents it from becoming desultory. My own recollections are all in favour of examinations, at least as they were conducted forty years ago. At school they had just sufficient influence over me to teach me the advantage of rigorous training, whilst I had time enough left on my hands—which certainly would seldom be the case now—to follow my own bent by reading and thinking on a subject entirely outside the curriculum of the school. It must, however, be remembered that teaching is more specialised now than it was then. Then with respect to examinations at Universities and for the public service, I

cannot put out of sight the advantages to the future employer of knowing who are fit to be employed, and it is evident that a good class or a fellowship is a passport to employment of one kind, and that public service examinations are a passport to employment of another kind. The question therefore arises whether this is a good thing or a bad thing. It seems to me that it is a good thing, conditionally on the power of examining so as to fix on the sort of qualities which are needed for the work of the world. Examinations which, like some of those at present in use for schoolboys, encourage cram, are from this point of view thoroughly bad. The real examination which is useful is meant to test two things which are useful in the work of life.

1. The possession of mental power.
2. Industry in accumulating knowledge.

I have personally been connected as examiner with only two examinations, (1) the Modern History Schools at Oxford, (2) the All Souls' Fellowships.

Of the first I should say that I should be glad if the amount of work required were diminished ; but, on the whole, I think that the examinations answer fairly to these two requirements. No one, unless by some unusual error, gets a first class, who does not show mental power. On the other hand no one gets a first class who is merely a clever fellow who has not shown working power. On this head, perhaps, you would differ from me, but it seems to me to be right to encourage differentiation of subjects, though when once the subject is chosen, it should be attacked on all sides. Individuality is to be encouraged, but not fads. I may add that, whenever I have examined, I have always tried to keep in mind the golden words which Brewer once used to me, "In examinations you should always try and find out whether the candidate can do easy things well, and not whether he can do hard things."

2. With respect to our All Souls' Fellowships, I can safely say that the examinations are conducted on the lines of my two principles. You will gather from what I have written what my view of the case is, so far as the examinations, in which I have personally taken part, are concerned.

The more questionable examinations, in my opinion, are those which take place earlier in life ; but my knowledge of these is, for the most part, derived from the testimony of others, and I therefore am unable to say anything from direct personal knowledge.

\* W. CHEADLE, M.D.

I cordially agree with the views expressed in most points. I have, however, made a few comments in the margin where I think the statement of the case a little too absolute and one-sided—these, merely for your consideration. I have appended a note to my signature which explains my position.

I have seen a great deal of the working of the examination system from three separate standpoints, viz.: (1) As a medical man who has more than common opportunities of observing the ailments and health standards of children. (2) As a teacher in a large medical school for some 20 years. (3) As examiner at Cambridge, and for the College of Physicians in the ordinary pass examination (one or other for the last ten years).

In the first capacity I am bound to say that I have met with much less evidence of physical injury than I should have anticipated. In the higher and middle class schools it is limited to the clever boys of promise, who take keen interest in their work, and strain in competition. To these, no doubt, serious damage is often the result of the over-pressure. But the average boy seems to be singularly little affected. He probably scamps and slurs his work, and does not work overtime, as the boys of great promise do. And he has usually ample time for recreation, and is well fed as a rule.

These compensations probably account largely for the comparatively small amount of harm done. In the Board Schools of the poorer classes the strain is much more general, the evil widespread. The home work is too much and pressure to get paying results too severe.

2. As a teacher in a medical school—looking back over my 20 years' experience—I have to confess that the improvement in the ordinary medical student is most remarkable. Formerly few students attended any teaching which was not compulsory, and they showed the smallest interest in the subjects. The medical wards of the hospital were visited only by a few rare enthusiasts. Now the students are almost all eager for knowledge. The difficulty is not to get them to come and learn as a rule, but to answer sufficiently their earnest inquiries. This is not altogether to be credited to competition; largely, I think, to more intelligent and attractive teaching. Yet the competition system has answered well in providing us with the most competent men for house physicians and house surgeons. It is slightly modified by considerations of conduct and character—

but these are again comparative and competitive. Curiously enough, too, and rather contrary to my expectations, *the men who do best in examinations do best practically, as a rule*; this has been very clear.

Further, nearly every student who has gained distinction in his profession afterwards, had previously come to the front in the hospital competitions.

3. As an Examiner, I find the candidates show great advance in knowledge, and in practical usable knowledge, as well as theoretical knowledge and bookwork. But this again is not of course to be credited entirely to the system of competitive examinations, but largely to more intelligent and attractive teaching. The system is overdone at school and at the Universities, and your exposition of the moral and intellectual evils which have arisen out of the struggle for prizes within narrow limits of routine teaching, is admirable. I think, however, that we should not overlook the great advance—on the whole—upon the old system of *laissez-faire*, and all the evils and corruptions of a system of favouritism and nomination, especially in the Public Services. In our hospitals these evils were rife when I first knew them, and the change for the better is undeniable.

PRINCIPAL J. V. JONES, M.A., UNIV. COLL. OF S. WALES,  
MONMOUTHSHIRE, CARDIFF.

Though I am not able to sign the protest, because its proposals are too drastic, I sincerely sympathise with the effort to limit the ascendancy of examination. I think we ought to make examination more of an educational episode, less of an educational end. To make it so practically, those engaged in the work of education must run a tilt against bad examinations and make them good, rather than against examinations altogether.

I have been asking myself what can be done in this way in the immediate future, and am going to trouble you with some suggestions. We may perhaps classify examinations thus :—

1. *Examinations used as instruments of education by teachers in their own classes.* To these there is no objection. They are a useful means of communication between teacher and pupil.

2. *Examinations on the results of which money grants are made by the Government.*

(a) The examination of elementary schools under the survival of Lowe's Revised Code. There is a battle raging round "payment

by results" in the elementary schools. I think we ought to endeavour to modify the Code in the direction of making less depend on the *individual* pass. Progress has been made in this direction during the last few years, and now I believe it is only payment on the three R's that is made on the individual result.

( $\beta$ ) Science and Art examinations, where grants are made on the individual pass absolutely. I am hardly prepared with suggestions as to these.

( $\gamma$ ) The examination of Intermediate schools in Ireland under Lord Beaconsfield's Act of 1879. Here there is a system of direct payment on the individual pass as in the Science and Art examinations. This is pernicious in connection with intermediate education, and ought to be swept away. The evidence is that it exercises a bad effect on the Irish Schools. In all the Welsh Intermediate Education Bills there is an attempt to impose on Wales either this system, or that of the Education Department. This we have to resist to the uttermost. The proper examinations for Intermediate Schools (High Schools and Grammar Schools) are examinations by the University mentioned under Head 4.

3. *Government Examinations on the results of which appointments are made to Government offices.* The chief objection to trying to get rid of them at present is that no one has been able to suggest an efficient substitute. Perhaps one of the examinations for which the competition is severest is the Indian Civil Service entrance examination. But the candidates chosen whom I met at Balliol were on the whole a cheery set of men, quite undepressed by the strain of the competition. Perhaps, however, those who failed felt it more.

4. *Examinations of Schools conducted by the Universities.* These seem to me to need extension rather than restriction. They are excellent examinations, and may be arranged so as to leave quite sufficient freedom to the teachers. It is proposed in the Intermediate Education Bills for Wales, introduced into the House of Commons, that grants of money should be made to Welsh Intermediate Schools partly by the Treasury, partly by local rates. If so, the grants must be made after inspection and examination conducted by some public body. The public body suggested in the Bills has been the Education Department. This will make a cast iron system for our Intermediate Schools, as rigid as that already found in connection with our Elementary Schools.



My proposal is that the work should be undertaken by a special board of the Welsh University, which ought, therefore (for this, as well as for many other reasons), to be brought into existence as soon as possible. In order to keep the teachers and the examining body in close connection, I would give the Head Masters a certain representation on the Board. In such a scheme I think we may fairly ask the support when the time comes of those who sign the Protest.

5. *University Examinations.*

(a) Scholarship examinations. I do not share the hostility to scholarships exhibited in the Protest—which goes so far as to invite people to cease to give money for scholarship purposes. How else are poor boys to be educated at the Universities? I admit that the recipients ought to be poor; but I see no way of awarding the scholarships except on the result of examinations.

(β) Degree examinations. We cannot, I think, do away with these examinations. But the University ought in all cases to see that the person examined has had sufficient teaching of such a quality as to make “cram” a superfluity of naughtiness. Of course this means that a purely examining University like the University of London ought not to exist.

The University of London at present provides the only way in which students in the Welsh Colleges can take their degree. But we are quite discontented with this arrangement, and I think there is a consensus of opinion in Wales that we could do much better with a leading University of our own, on the lines of the Victoria University as regards its constitution.

(γ) Fellowship examinations. I agree with the Protest that Prize Fellowships ought to be abolished and the endowment applied towards increasing the teaching power of the Universities. The later that work for an examination comes in life, the more intellectual injury does it do. Fellowship examinations of the ordinary kind ought to be utterly done away with.

With some of our Professors the document has met great approval, and I think one or two of them would like to sign it.

THE LATE G. S. VENABLES, Q.C.

I have read the Remonstrance against the system of competitive examination with interest and with partial agreement; but I think I should not be justified in signing it, partly as I dissent from some

of your conclusions and especially as I have had no experience of the effect of the practice on young men who are or are not successful. I well remember the introduction of the system by a committee, of which, I think, Sir Stafford Northcote and Sir Charles Trevelyan were the principal or sole members. I wrote on the subject frequently, and almost always in an adverse sense. The main object of the advocates of competition was rather to relieve Ministers and Members of Parliament from a troublesome kind of patronage, not either to improve the Civil Service or to promote sound education. I believe that much of the opinion in favour of the experiment was founded on the remarkable, and, at that time, exceptional fairness of the College and University examinations at Cambridge. At Oxford there were few open fellowships or scholarships. My own impression was and is that the Cambridge endowments produced in this respect a very good result. A very large proportion of those who took the highest honours afterwards distinguished themselves in various branches. In my year, which I mention only because I remember the circumstances best, the four first in the Classical Tripos were afterwards known as great scholars. They were E. L. Lushington, Greek Professor and afterwards Lord Rector of Glasgow; Shillito, for many years a celebrated private tutor at Cambridge; Dobson, who almost created at Cheltenham one of the largest and best schools in England; and Thompson, Professor of Greek and Master of Trinity. The Senior Wrangler of the same year, Heath, afterwards assisted Spedding in his "Life of Bacon"; he is still alive, and a master of some abstruse branches of learning. The second Wrangler, Laing, was Finance Minister in India, and he is known as a very able railway administrator. Some years afterwards, when I was amongst the examiners for the Classical Tripos, the first three men were Vaughan, now Dean of Llandaff and Master of the Temple, and for several years Head Master of Harrow, Lord Lyttleton, and May, who until lately was Chief Justice of Ireland. In short, the Cambridge system, as it then was, marked out the best and ablest men, and I do not think it a disadvantage that it enabled them to commence their careers on a small annuity which gave them an equal chance with men of independent fortune. When I first joined the bar, the majority of the Common Law Judges—I think ten out of twelve—had taken degrees, most of them high degrees at Cambridge. The universal system of competition must have a very different operation. As you say, the

moral evils of a system do not develop themselves at first. It is the second or third generation which feels their full influence. I always, therefore, think there was some force in the doubt, as expressed by orthodox disputants, whether the Sermon on the Mount would long survive the Apostles' Creed—not to mention the Thirty Nine Articles. It may possibly be found that the fair morality of Positivists and others is a survival or a cut flower detached from its root. I am, therefore, not indisposed to believe that there is much ground for your remonstrance, and think there will be more. The reigning creed was first, I think, preached by Macaulay in his speech on the Indian Civil Service, about 1843. He quoted the existence of Cambridge examinations without foreseeing that cram would supersede sound learning. I have always suspected that the Cambridge orthodox scholarship and mathematics were almost or quite the only subjects which could become subjects of competition without being vulgarised.† A competent examiner can scarcely be deceived as to the genuineness of a translation from Thucydides or, I suppose, for I am not a mathematician, a difficult problem. History and almost all other subjects are got up for examination out of compendiums and school text books, and not by study of originals. I was once told by a young and not very brilliant candidate for a commission that his tutor had advised him to learn Italian, of which he was quite ignorant, for three weeks, in the hope that it would procure him a small but useful number of marks.

As you will perceive I have not a very definite or instructive judgment to pronounce on the important subject in which you are interested, but it seemed possible that a few desultory remarks would fill up a chink somewhere in this controversy. One of my doubts as to Civil Service competition is that the examinations are, to use a turf illustration, which I hope is correct, races of cock tails, and not as formerly at Cambridge of thoroughbreds. The best candidates are only the second or third best, and the tests which they have to satisfy must be kept proportionately low ; but my letter is already too voluminous.

\* D. H. TUKE, M.D.

In reply to your request, I beg to say that I believe the evils, physical and mental, arising out of our present hot-bed system of

† In this sentence I am doubtful about my rendering of the words.—A.H.

education, are very real, and exert an influence far beyond what mere statistics can tabulate or prove. This is the primary difficulty under which we, who firmly believe in this malign influence, labour. I have in an article entitled "Intemperance in study" placed a number of instances on record and have given the general result, of my experience as to the disastrous effects of cramming, and the perverse ingenuity of examiners, as a class, in striving to discover what students do not, instead of what they do, know. I could not, however, draw up any definite statistical statement showing the proportion of scholars or students who suffer from brain or other affections. The fact is, the effect of over- or ill-directed study are so often unrecognised at the time that when they occur they do not attract the attention they merit in relation to the original cause. Many are apparently uninjured, when they have passed their examinations, whose mental perceptions are more or less blunted, and to that extent injured for life. I fully admit that a certain number of cases of mental disease attributed to over-study, have nothing whatever to do with it. Let this admission have its full weight. Against this I place the numerous instances of break-down which never reach an asylum, but are well-known to physicians outside asylums.

Again I grant that a very large amount of mental application in boys and even girls is compatible with healthy action of the brain, on two conditions, first, that the accompanying physical conditions are in accordance with the laws of health; and, secondly, that studies are wisely directed. For example, several languages can be acquired with or without undue mental strain, according to the plan adopted. Under "wisely directed" I desire to include the avoidance of those concomitants of pure study which induce anxiety or worry. This, I take it, is just the point to which your attention and chief energies must be directed. Anxiety and worry are inseparable from the modern system of examination and prize-giving. You hope to modify the evils which have now attained such serious dimensions. All physicians ought to heartily wish you success, but none more so than those who like myself, devote themselves to mental disorders.

*From Second Letter.*

Since writing to you on overstudy, I have met with a very intelligent schoolmaster of a large, high-class school, who informs me, while highly valuing the general system of education, and

recognising the important results obtained, he is fully conscious that they are frequently secured at the risk of injury to the bodily and mental health of the scholars.

In the higher classes of such a school the number of subjects considered indispensable in a boy's education, which generally must be finished at a comparatively early age, is too great. Six hours a day spent under the actual teaching of a master implies a great deal of preparation, four or five hours daily, and sometimes even more in preparing this work. Boys frequently look pale and exhausted, and are laid aside unable to prosecute their work. Such cases occur every year in the school. The time spent in the evening in learning lessons varies with age. Even those boys who do not specially exert themselves work in the evenings, when from 10 to 12 years of age,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours; if from 12 to 14 years, 2 hours; and above that age,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours. In regard to examinations, very hard work and longer hours are necessarily required to secure success.

My informant believes it to be a great evil that the school routine should be pursued with the constant idea of an examination in view. He wishes the schools to preserve their characteristics, and not be reduced to a dead level. As a matter of fact some schools are so strongly impressed with this evil that they are sending up to the authorities a representation of the work that has been accomplished during the previous term, and inviting examinations on that work.

He states that in his experience boys are sometimes prematurely cut off (in one case in the course of the examination itself) by the strain of the previous preparation and the excitement of the ordeal. It was also his own personal experience, and he has observed it in others, that there was often, in passing the College examinations, a strong desire to throw off the subjects altogether from the mind, upon which it had been strenuously engaged. "For a considerable time after the examinations, my mind," he says, "felt a perfect blank."

The remedies suggested by Mr. — were :—

1. Not examining in so many subjects, which means that a boy should not study so many subjects at the same time.
2. Encouraging the use of object lessons in children from 6 to 10.
3. As there must be examinations, it is desirable there should be a fair average pass examination, so that no really industrious and capable youth need feel discouraged, while brighter boys would gain distinction from passing a higher examination.

4. Adopting generally in schools the practice referred to, of adapting the examination to the work of the school, instead of the work of the school being adapted to the expected examination.

I think you may find the experience of this schoolmaster of many years' experience of some value in your present inquiry. I may add that since I saw you my attention was drawn while visiting Perth Asylum to a young man in a state of mental stupor, following over-study, while in the Montrose Asylum I saw a female pupil teacher, whose malady was attributed to the same cause. Two such cases are not proofs of a wide-spread evil, but serve as illustrations.

\* FRANCIS WARNER, M.D.

*How to lessen the adverse results of examinations.*—Examinations are in many cases necessary; it is a practical question how we may lessen the physical evils which too often follow therefrom. I propose here to deal rather with the candidates than with the examinations. I recently made observations in a high class Primary School, eight days after the Government examination, with the following results. In Standards Ex. VII., VII., and VI. there were eighty-one boys, of whom fifteen (eighteen per cent.) showed some signs of fatigue or nervousness; the conclusion come to was that the examination work had produced some fatigue in the boys, and that it would have been better to have had a day in the play-ground after the examination, and to have delayed raising the boys to their new standards till a fortnight later. A part of the cause of their fatigue may have been due to their passing directly from an examination to the higher standards, to which they had at once been transferred after examination. Having often visited primary schools, it appears to me that Government inspection would do more good in endeavouring to put each child in his right place, instead of always raising him a standard after each pass examination, and credit might be given to teachers for placing children in their appropriate places. The necessary moving-up after a pass examination appears to produce some undesirable results, such as small and feeble children, as well as children of dull mental power, getting into the higher standards, where they are out of place; this line of action appears often to work to the disadvantage of the children who commence school life at an early age, and work well to pass every examination. A child should not be raised to a higher

standard unless it be to the child's advantage, even if it does pass the examination. I might quote examples similar to those given above from observations made in a large Grammar School and one of our Public Schools, but refrain from multiplying evidence here, as enough may have been said to show the advantages that may result from a more careful and detailed scientific observation and classification of children in school. A few words as to the observations referred to. It is possible to note signs of physiognomy, development, and the condition of brain state as indicated by visible movements and balances in parts of the body. Of this I have treated fully elsewhere. (*Anatomy of Movement*—Hunterian Lectures at the Royal College of Surgeons. Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co.)

Turning to the other side of the case—the influence of examinations on education. A great part of the evil resulting from examinations appears to come from the unfitness of candidates to enter upon the course of study necessary for a particular examination, the responsibility of which must rest with the student and his advisers. Nothing but a general change in public opinion is likely to rectify this defect. It would be well if parents and others interested in education would visit schools more, and see something of the methods employed, and learn to study children for themselves. As a teacher and examiner, I may say that students for our medical examinations often fail from want of accuracy in habits of thought, rather than from want of knowledge. Many men read without learning to think, and weary themselves with their volumes in place of exercising the brain power, an evil that can be remedied by wise tutorial teaching. Examiners might encourage the cultivation of mental faculty by requiring fewer “lists of facts,” more grounds of evidence and practical knowledge. It is to be hoped that we may soon have before us more facts as to the physical effects of public examinations.

*The following Letter concerning the appointment of Clerks in “The Gas Light and Coke Company,” addressed to Col. W. Makins, M.P., has been kindly forwarded by him.*

DEAR MR. GOVERNOR,

Appointment of Junior Clerks.—The curriculum here is a very simple one (little more than the three R's), but I should be sorry to see it altered. As you are aware, absolute reliance is placed upon you and your colleagues, whose right it is to nominate candidates

for appointments to clerkships, that the lads you nominate are socially fitted to enter the service of a great public company. We do not want philosophers. We like lads of about fifteen years of age, fresh from school, with uncrammed, unjaded brains still capable of imbibing instruction, and of working industriously and intelligently from nine till five without breaking down. We require a candidate to come here by himself and to sit down alone to write out of his own head a letter of application, to fill up a schedule of information about himself and his education, and to cast and prove a column or two of figures, and notice is taken by my assistant secretary of the time occupied in performing this task. The candidate then brings in his work to me, and his real examination (which in fact is only conversation) takes place. Long experience has taught me to find out in five minutes which are the reliable boys, the untrustworthy boys, the plodding boys, and the quick, clever boys. After putting a lad at his ease, a little encouraging talk gives a very fair insight as to whether he is fit for us or not. I take before you the test candidates, and you select the one you think the most eligible. We have nearly five hundred officers, and you know how very rarely I have to bring before you a case of inefficiency or misconduct. The general result of our system is that you have, as I firmly believe, as intelligent, straightforward, hearty, and industrious a set of fellows as can be found in any service throughout the kingdom, and I am very proud of them. I don't believe in cramming or competitive examinations with thousands of marks, but without any knowledge of boys' personal fitness. I prefer what I have got, well conducted youngsters of average common sense, who take an intelligent interest in their duty and strive to do it to the best of their ability. They soon master whatever is put before them and work thoroughly well. You will recognise the enclosure as one of our ordinary applications, written and worked out in the office here, before being brought in to me, and out of such material we make capital clerks.

Faithfully yours,

W. PHILLIPS.

\* MR. JOHN RUSSELL, EDITOR OF "*The Schoolmaster*."

The article on the "Sacrifice of Education" will do much good. The teachers of the Elementary Schools have been groaning under a burden for six and twenty years,—wasting much of their



time and wearing out their lives in a round of ceaseless worry. Meanwhile the rising generation is suffering from the lack of really intelligent training, and the industrial classes of the future must be lower than ever in the scale of intellectual beings. "Payment by Results" is the curse of the country, and if the recent "Protest" be in any way useful in moving public attention to the evil, the Editor of the *Nineteenth Century* will have done the cause of education no mean service.

#### THE EARL OF CARNARVON.

Without binding myself to all the details in the paper, I entirely sympathise in its general object.

I am very far from denying the value of competitive examinations of a certain kind and under certain limitations too long here to define. For the sake of illustration, in one of the highest branches of education, I doubt whether there was ever a much better method of intellectual training than the old class-honour system at Oxford forty years ago. Or, again, the system of nomination with a sufficiently high qualifying test was, if fairly carried out, a very sensible one, and though not applicable to all cases, might have been retained or adopted in many departments of the public service with great advantage. Or, once more, nomination with a limited competition, as in the Foreign Office, may be made to produce very satisfactory results. Further, I do not see how, under existing Parliamentary conditions, it would be possible to dispense altogether with competitive examinations. Those conditions in many respects are very bad, but competitive examination must be accepted as the least of several evils, and, anyhow, it is too late now to abolish it.

But the excessive and still growing competition, carried as it is into all branches—high and low—of education, and the severe pressure put upon young brains before they are fit for it, with the consequent mischief indirectly done to health, seem to me an evil of the first magnitude. We are now in every branch and kind of education cramming, often senselessly as regards any mental result, still more often injuriously as regards health and character. The whole programme of instruction now-a-days seems to me to be resolved into cramming and hurry, at a time of life when whatever is put into the youth or boy should be as complete and well digested as circumstances allow.

I dwell particularly on the mischief to health, for there seems a wide concurrence on the part of many high authorities as to this mental over-pressure. This is, however, a matter of fact which is more or less susceptible of enquiry and verification.

The advocates of the present state desire those who complain of it to specify what they desire in substitution ; but I cannot recognise the justice of this argument. An alternative need not necessarily be found in the abolition of the existing method and its replacement by something entirely new ; but it may be that a sensible alteration or modification of our present educational system might, at all events, remove some of the worst evils. It appears to me that our chief error consists in having pushed reasonable principles much too far, and our danger lies in allowing that excess to be carried still further.

#### \* PROFESSOR H. NETTLESHIP.

I am one of those who think that examinations, in one form or other, are necessary in all systems of instruction, but who also feel strongly that the examination should be made subservient to the instruction, not the instruction to the examination. I here give, for what they are worth, the results of my observations in a very limited field.

I. *Appointments.*—So far as I am able to judge of the system of competitive examinations in its application to the appointment of college tutors and lecturers, I should say that it is on the whole a security for honesty in election, but that it is by no means an infallible method of obtaining the right man. As tests of knowledge and intellectual power, the examinations for college fellowships may be said, with some reservations, to have been successful. They are, however, entirely powerless as tests of character ; I am not speaking of good character in the ordinary sense, which is presupposed in the candidate, but of devotion to study or educational work, and generally of moral vigour. Tutorial appointments are now sometimes made without examination, the candidate's intellectual competence being ascertained from his place in the class lists, and the probability of his becoming a successful teacher by testimonials and enquiry. This system has, I believe, answered fairly well in the case of appointments to masterships in schools, and there seems no reason, supposing, of course, honesty of intention in working it, why

it should not answer in the case of college appointments. And, on the whole, the interest of the colleges as places of education is likely to prove a security for honest intention.

II. *Competitive examinations as tests of teaching.*—Examinations, of some sort, are, in my opinion, necessary as tests of teaching, but I fail to see that the element of competition makes them better tests. And I am convinced that competitive examinations, as they are now managed, are tending more and more to become not the test, but the end and aim of teaching, and thus to vitiate the principles of education at the fountain head. The aim of education should be the free and natural development of the physical, moral, and mental faculties. There is probably no system which has ever existed, or which could be devised, which does not fall lamentably short of this ideal; but the more a system tends to rest on the principle of competition, the further does it depart from the true standard.

1. To take first the present habit of training boys under fourteen years of age for the entrance scholarships offered at the schools. The boy, just at an age when his work should be light and adapted to his youth, is put under a cramming *régime* which is the very opposite of what nature would prescribe. He is forced to absorb a mass of book-learning which three or four years later it would be quite right for him to acquire, but which it is extremely unlikely that, at his age, he can healthily assimilate. He is taught, for instance, to master the niceties of Latin Grammar, and even to make good Latin prose, long before his literary feeling has been awakened. And this is only a part of the evil. Far worse—to say nothing of the moral effect of constantly working to beat others—is the excitement and general strain on the system induced by the attitude of competition. And all this is inflicted upon the clever boys, whose temperament is on the whole more than commonly sensitive and their brain more excitable, and who therefore have the strongest claim to be spared all unnecessary pressure, and to be allowed a normal and natural growth. The system has been fostered, no doubt, by the habit of what may be called “boy-grabbing,” induced by competition among the schools. Every school wants to get more clever boys than every other school. If it be said that the evil is a necessary one, it may be replied that the nation has done very well without it before, and may very well do without it again.

2. *Competitive examination and school instruction.* I speak here

from a very limited experience. But from what I have observed I believe that the anxiety among school-masters and school-mistresses to make a show in the University examination lists, whether in the local examinations or in the examinations for college scholarships, has often a bad effect in narrowing the sphere of teaching, and cramping the independence of the teacher. I have been told on good authority that this is certainly the case in girls' schools. With regard to boys, I know that in some cases the habit has grown up of teaching from examination papers, though to what extent it prevails I cannot say. It is probably more prevalent in private tuition than in school instruction. All I am concerned to note is the existence of what seems to me a radically vicious method. The object of classical education at school, say up to the age of eighteen or nineteen, is, I suppose, to give a boy an intelligent knowledge and appreciation of some of the greatest works in Greek and Latin literature. It is clear that with this end he should be encouraged to read as much as possible for himself. He should, when he comes up to the University, have read (say) through Homer and Virgil, and a fair amount of the great orators, poets, and historians. If to this he can add a sound knowledge of syntax and a fair facility in writing Greek and Latin, he has done all that can be expected of him. But it is not too much to expect, if his masters direct his studies with the single aim of training his mind, not with the view of drilling him in examination fence. All that is wanted is continuous reading and writing, and a few systematic lectures in the more advanced parts of the syntax. The fear of examinations has, however, encouraged a system of setting for translation past examination papers containing isolated bits of Greek and Latin; a proceeding not without value as an occasional exercise, but very unwholesome, if it tends, as I believe it does, to drive out, and destroy belief in, the habit of continuous reading. Again, I believe a habit has grown up, whether among masters at schools I am not sure, but certainly among private tutors, of teaching points of syntax and antiquities from papers of questions set in past scholarship examinations, rather than by a coherent treatment of the subjects. This method is bad, as encouraging disjointed cram, and effectually destroying any natural interest that a boy might have in the matter in question. It would, perhaps, not be a bad thing if college tutors would cease to set papers of so called "critical questions" in their scholarship examinations. This would leave the masters of schools

free to teach syntax, antiquities, history, nay even the elements of comparative philology, in a coherent and natural manner.

3. *Competitive examinations and University instruction.* My experience is limited to Oxford, and in Oxford to the first and least valuable part of the classical course. Generally speaking, from what I know of the average opinion and practice among the students and the teaching body, I should say that the examinations, with rare exceptions, completely dominate the studies of the undergraduate. I cannot illustrate the prevailing sentiment better than by the following scraps of dialogue, which I can vouch for as authentic.

*Tutor* : "I see Mr. B. is examining. He is sure to set a question on the manuscripts of Sophocles. Here is a *memoria technica* for you; take it home and learn it. But stay;—when you have learned it, I would advise you to learn it backwards, and answer the question in the reverse order of the *memoria technica*, lest they should suspect you of having crammed the answer."

*Professor to Undergraduate* : "You know Professor A., I think?" *U.* : "Yes." *P.* : "I suppose you find his lectures very good?" *U.* : "Oh, certainly; admirable; but——" *P.* : "But then?" *U.* : "Well—I hardly know—but the fact is they are *too interesting*." *P.* : "Too interesting! A rare defect I should imagine." *U.* : "Well, you see, I think the point of a lecture is that it should give you exactly what you want for your examination. You write it all down, and then go back to your room and get it up, and you are quite safe. Professor A. is rather fond of digressing from the point."

*Undergraduate to Tutor* : "Did you take in Juvenal for Moderations, sir?" *T.* : "Yes, certainly." *U.* : "O!—in that case I should like to ask you a question in it."

*Undergraduate to Professor* : "Can you tell me, sir, what style of Latin Prose pays best in examination?"

The "pecuniary value of a first class" is now quite a common expression, which I have heard, and even within the august walls of Convocation House. The fact is, that we have to deal with a state of opinion which insists on regarding knowledge merely as a means towards getting on in life; and it is perhaps futile to suppose that any change of existing arrangements will do anything to alter it. The demon of cram will always dog the steps of the pilgrims who journey to the shrine of knowledge. If, however, any practical suggestions are of avail, I would offer the following. Most of our

honour examinations might, I think, be shortened with advantage. As far as classics are concerned, I think that a three years' course of study, terminated by a sound general examination in the masterpieces of classical poetry, oratory, history, and philosophy would be better than the present system of a four years' course with two long examinations. The first public examination ("Moderations"), which takes place at the end of the fifth term, is really a school-boyish affair. Its matter is, primarily, the classical poets and orators; the historians and philosophers are left to be studied afterwards. This separation of classical reading into two parts seems to me of doubtful value. The sound and natural method of reading the classics is the historical method. Thucydides should be studied and lectured upon side by side with Euripides and Aristophanes, Cicero with Lucretius, Livy with Horace and Virgil, Tacitus with Juvenal and Martial. I know not whether I should add Isocrates and Demosthenes with Plato and Aristotle. Style and matter should not be separated by statute. An improvement in the examinations would not, of course, exorcise the spirit of cram, but it might render it less dangerous.

III. *Competitive Examinations as an incentive to steady industry.*—I suppose it may be taken for granted that during the last thirty years an improvement has taken place at Oxford among the undergraduates in the matter of industry and observance of discipline. Many high authorities here attribute this advance almost entirely to the development of the examination system. I am certainly in no way entitled to contradict this conclusion, but I think it may be worth while to ask whether the improvement may not be partly due to three other main causes: 1, the extension of the field of study, which now includes much besides classics and mathematics; 2, the general softening of manners throughout English society; 3, the increasing difficulty of getting on in life without a certain amount of steady work.

PROFESSOR T. E. HOLLAND, D.C.L., ALL SOULS, OXFORD.

I have no doubt that our highly organised system of examinations places great difficulties in the way of efficient teaching and of disinterested study. It is also likely enough, though not, I think, proved, that competitive examinations, in the case at any rate of girls and young boys, may produce physical evils. The whole

subject appears, therefore, to call for careful enquiry, and the enquiry should extend to methods and results in other countries. It should be directed to the working of examinations, and to the feasibility of finding substitutes for examinations, for the following purposes :

1. Providing qualifying tests of competence for the exercise of certain professions.
2. Encouraging the attainment of exceptional knowledge of various kinds in early life.
3. Providing upward careers for persons of humble means but of promising ability.
4. Selection of persons no longer *in statu pupillari*, whom it is desirable to encourage to devote themselves to learned research, or whose access to the professions it may be expedient to facilitate.
5. Manning the Government services.

The problems to be solved are complex, and must be attacked in detail. It ought to be possible to ascertain the physical effects of competitive examinations, and it would certainly be possible to diminish the number of examinations to be passed by any given individual. I believe that a high qualifying standard might be advantageously substituted in many cases for an honours class list at the Universities.

\* MR. J. ROBINSON, CRICKLEWOOD.

This system, if longer persisted in, will be almost the ruin of our young men and women of the day—physically certainly, socially and morally possibly. Unfortunately it is too true that many such enter for scholarships, &c., much as they would enter themselves for a foot race, *i.e.*, to win something, but what benefit that result may have on their future advancement and welfare they think little and care less. What matters it for the moment to them so long as they are permitted to Cram, Cram, Cram, and endeavour to acquire in a brief space of time what their forefathers frequently did not accomplish in a lifetime. Will they be better men or women for that ?

\* MISS A. J. COOPER.

I do not think that we should endeavour to get rid of examinations even as outside tests. I believe that they may be so subordi-

nated in a school system that they are the servants, not the masters of the teachers.

Some of the suggestions made concerning substitutes for examinations are, in my opinion, not good from the educational point of view. There is one point on which the memorial is silent, which is, I think, of importance, especially with regard to my own special work. It is that the present system of examinations and scholarships brings to the front and makes much of individuals who have sufficient brain power to get learning without much capacity for real culture. A girl of this kind gets through her school course with honours, goes to the University, whence she proceeds to the work of teaching. This is the last person one really needs for the proper education of girls, and I consider that the increase of such uncultured scholars is greatly to be deplored.

\* MRS. STURGE.

I do not sign as the holder of any public appointment, but as the mother of a large family, several of whom have passed through the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, and London, have taken the degrees of M.A. Oxford, M.D. London, and passed the Moral Science Tripos at Cambridge; as regards this last, my daughter cannot receive the actual degree. All these candidates suffered more or less from the severity of the work and the examinations. Another son at Cirencester Agricultural College took every distinction possible, but so suffered in health that he never recovered, and died at the age of 26. I have at present a daughter who is pursuing the study and undergoing the examinations for the M.D. of London. I, therefore, think that I am well qualified to judge of the moral and physical effect of examinations as now practised.

\* R. N. MACDONALD, M.D.

Having myself been permanently injured by overwork many years ago, I have always taken the deepest interest in educational matters, and in what is very properly termed "the sacrifice of education to examinations."

It must not be supposed, however, that this system is confined entirely to those young men who compete for the public services. It is rife at Universities, colleges, and most public schools, not to



mention the dreadful havoc that has been worked amongst delicate children, especially since the passing of the Educational Acts.

In order to begin at the beginning I shall take the latter first. The grave dangers which attend upon schooling, pushing, and cramming in early life are that owing to ignorance on the part of the pupil and teacher in regard to hereditary influences, diseases actually acquired, or the sequelæ of the exanthemata, permanent damage is often done, and fatal results frequently follow attendance at school and the subsequent worry of learning lessons at home. This is especially dangerous when there is any hereditary tendency to tuberculosis, or consumption, which is so common to many families, as very little over-excitement, fever, raps on the head, etc., may induce tubercular meningitis, from which there is *no* recovery. I have frequently had to interfere in cases of this nature.

The moment a child begins to rave about its lessons in its sleep, it is time to stop, as the mind is over-anxious and worried, and the fear of meeting the teacher on the following morning adds terror to the excited infantile mind. Those, who are anxious and willing, are also in danger, as their delicate organisms are easily upset and the processes of digestion and nutrition,—so indispensable to growing youth,—interfered with; indeed, where ever the seeds of actual disease exist, they only too surely yield fruit.

Many and many are the lives of innocent and helpless children thus sacrificed annually to the folly, stupidity, and ignorance of parents, school boards, and teachers. A very intelligent teacher of great experience to whom I lately applied for an opinion writes me as follows: "It is pitiable to see these poor creatures (the children) cramming and being crammed for those wretched annual examinations." Could anything be more self-condemning than that?

In the case of young persons and adults the danger is almost as great. Prolonged study and confinement, when life is at its brightest, are in themselves unnatural and baneful, for when youth is deprived to a great extent of exercise and freedom the vital functions become less active, and, as a natural sequence, the brain becomes more torpid and less capable of retaining the pabulum supplied, digestion and nutrition are interfered with, the brain power diminishes, and when the excitement is prolonged, it is bound to produce more or less anaemia of the brain, from which the student is fortunate if he escapes without some permanent strain being left behind which tells upon him in after life. Cramming, moreover, takes all origin-

ality out of one, and failures engender loss of confidence, and too often recourse to the doubtful expedient of the bottle!

Cramming has never yet done any one any good. On the contrary, it has done a great deal of mischief by tending, with very few exceptions, to diminish self-reliance and resource, thereby inducing one to lean almost entirely upon book learning in preference to original thought and research; indeed many students it has injured for the remainder of their lives.

All candidates for the public services are bound to cram, and they can't be prevented from doing so, and, moreover, they are quite justified in doing so, as the examiner's object is to ascertain what they *do not* know, rather than what they *do* know, and when success at an examination is preferred to health, it is inevitable that if A does not cram B will.

But the moral of the whole question is this: Have the public services been improved and strengthened, and have they always got the best men? I don't believe either the one or the other. They have not as yet turned out either a Clive or a Wellington, and are not likely to do so. Some other tests, therefore, must be applied in order to obtain the great desideratum of "*Mens sana in corpore sano*."

\* THE LATE HON. GUY DAWNAY.

I am very glad to see that you are calling attention to one of the growing evils of the age, in the "Sacrifice of Education to Examination." It may be difficult to see a remedy, or to suggest an alternative plan which would not itself be liable to abuse, but the evils of the existing system are manifest and crying, and it is high time that they should be pointed out, and a protest entered against them. Our present educational system has resulted in the most complete confusion of means and end, and has made what was only intended to be a means to an end to be itself the one great end and object. The examination, which was only intended to be a means of testing education, has become perverted into being itself the aim and object of education. It is exactly as if in the manufacture of big guns we were to be content with firing out of them some one enormous test charge without actually bursting them on the spot, and were then to let them pass into the service, regardless of the fact that the excessive test charge had over-strained the metal, and ruined the gun for any future real service.

The proper object of an examination should be to show in the case of qualifying examination the good men, in case of competitive examination the best men, with a view to utilizing subsequently the good qualities they have shown ; to show not only a candidate's power of preception and memory, and his past industry in acquiring a knowledge of facts and formulas, but as far as possible to gauge his ability to apply the knowledge he has acquired. Our present hothouse forcing system may be successful as a test of industry and a measure of "cram," but it as lamentably fails to show the really best men for the subsequent work of life, as hothouse growth and a prize at a horticultural show would fail to prove that a tropical palm tree would stand the rigour of an English winter. The best horse is not after all the one that wins the race and breaks down in the act of winning, but the horse that though defeated passes the post still full of running. Unluckily too many of those who are concerned in the management of education are in the position of an owner or trainer with a big stake on his horse ; and in such a case the owner or trainer might perhaps prefer that his horse should pass the post first, even at the cost of its breaking down in doing so.

I have owned to a fear that it will be found much easier to criticize the present system than to invent a better one—free alike from the evils of patronage on the one hand and of "cram" on the other—but I would at least suggest, if the competitive examination system be continued, that some efforts should be made to take into account the *corpus sanum* as well as the *mens sana*. The best men for future work will be those who can pass the best examination with greatest ease to themselves—who pass the post still full of running—whose mental muscles have been trained without detriment to their physical powers. For some competitive examinations, as for instance for the Army and Navy, there is also a previous qualifying medical examination. I would suggest that, wherever possible, actual marks should be given to any proved physical excellence. By "proved physical excellence" I mean excellence that had either already attained some public notoriety, such as would attach to a place in a "Varsity Eight," or in the cricket elevens or football elevens of any of our great public schools and Universities—or to the winner of any of the great annual athletic events, running, jumping, boxing, etc., or excellence that could be proved by practical trial during the general course of examination, as could be done in case of gymnastics, boxing, singlestick, etc. There are only, of

course, a few examinations in which public school or University performers are likely to compete, but the last mentioned form of practical physical competition might find a place in every general examination in the kingdom, and would at least form an amusing and healthy interlude amidst the weary hours of paper work.

I am quite aware that there may be many initial difficulties in the way of carrying out such a scheme, and that there may be many objections raised to such an idea. It will be said that physical prowess is already sufficiently encouraged in our schools and colleges. I contend that it should not only be encouraged indirectly, but that it should be directly recognised, as long, that is, as we stick to a system which at least pretends to ensure as far as possible by examination the selection and employment of the best members of the youth of the nation. I believe that under some such system as I suggest, "cram" would count less, and general ability more; that at least to some small extent it would assist a better, a healthier, and a more generally capable class of men to win their way into the public service; and that to that extent it would tend to lessen the private evils of a system which makes education a means, and examination the goal, and which fails more and more to recognise that education is the life long object, and examination a mere instrument to gauge the progress made towards its attainment.

#### \* PROFESSOR CYRIL RANSOME.

The evil of appraising intellectual merit *solely* by its power of manifesting itself in examination results is so many sided, that it is difficult to give due prominence to all the directions in which the intellectual and moral fibre of the nation is being injured by its action. The points, however, which strike me as cardinal, and to which the other injurious influences converge, are the following.

1. The moral degradation of substituting the ignoble desire to beat some one else, for the noble aim of making the best of the talents which have been allotted to one's share.

2. The intellectual harm which must follow the regulation of the studies of the nation not by what is best worth knowing but by what can most readily be submitted to the test of examination. As a special instance of this I would mention the degradation of the study of Shakespeare and Burke and other great masters of English literature, by making them a mere vehicle for stringing together obsolete and out-of-the-way expressions. As an example of this

I desire nothing better than the pass questions set last summer in the Higher Local Examination of the University of Cambridge on Shakespeare's *Richard II.* and Burke's *French Revolution*.

"*Richard II.*

"I. Comment *briefly* on the *expressions italicised* in the following, explaining the grammatical construction, where it is noticeable.

1. Our souls . . banish'd this frail *sepulchre of our flesh*.
2. Like perspectives, which *rightly* gazed upon,  
Shew nothing but confusion.
3. That *power* I have discharge ; and let them go  
To ear the land, that hath some hope to grow.
4. His eye . . . lightens forth *controlling majesty*.
5. *I could sing*, would weeping do me good.
6. Ah, thou, the *model where old Troy did stand*.
7. *Who are the violets* now,  
That strew the green lap of the new-come Spring ?
8. Who, sitting in the stocks, *refuge their shame*,  
That many have, and others must sit there.

"Who are the speakers here ?

"II. 'I have been studying how I may compare,' etc. Give an abstract of this speech sufficient to show its purpose and character, and the connection of its parts.

"*Burke's French Revolution*.

"I. Explain briefly the following phrases as used by Burke : relax the *nerves*—*Babylonian* pulpits—Theban and Thracian orgies—our minds are purified by terror and pity—the Euripus of funds and actions—this sort of discourse does well enough with a *lamp-post* for its second.

"II. Explain briefly :

1. If the Parliaments had been preserved, . . . they might have served in this new commonwealth . . . near the same purposes as the court and Senate of Areopagus did at Athens.
2. Mais si maladia, opinatria, non vult se garire ; quid illi facere ? assignare ; postea assignare ; ensuite assignare.

"III. Put clearly the sense of the following sentences, and point out the faults in them as they stand :

1. It is better that the whole should be imperfectly answered than that while some parts are provided for with great exactness, others might be totally neglected.

2. They are not under a false show of liberty but in truth to exercise an unnatural inverted dominion tyrannically to exact from those who officiate in the state not an entire devotion to their interests which is their right but an abject submission to their occasional will."

Such is the mere verbal criticism which does duty with the University of Cambridge for a knowledge of the works of our greatest authors, and such is the result of habitually conforming the pursuit of knowledge to the requirements of examinations.

3. The injury done to the public service by a system of selection, which, in defiance of daily experience, is based on the assumption that ability to pass examinations in book-subjects is synonymous with a capacity to fulfil any function in life, and that inability to do so is an incontrovertible proof of intellectual and practical worthlessness.

In conclusion I may perhaps venture to point out that the evil of examinations is immensely increased by their multiplication. In the hands of good examiners the evils, though not extinguished, are at a minimum. But the qualities which make a good examiner are rare, and consequently, the multiplication of examinations must result in the placing of a great deal of the work in hands which are incapable of even making the best of a bad system.

PROF. CUNNINGHAM, MARINE BIOLOGICAL ASSO., PLYMOUTH.

I have read the Protest you sent me against the examination system, and am sorry to say I cannot sign it. I am convinced that the charges against the examination system are grossly exaggerated. The idea of reform implied in your Protest has, it seems to me, the radical defect attributed by Matthew Arnold to all middle-class effort in England: it is merely a reform of machinery, it implies the faith that if only the machinery were perfect all would be well.\* But what really wants improving is human nature. It is the abuse of the examination system, not its essential character, which is responsible for evil consequences.

\* The signatories would probably prefer to state their case by saying that, given an imperfect human nature, the present machinery helps to develop some of the most serious of such imperfections.—A. H.

As I have lived on scholarships and a fellowship to a great extent since I was seventeen years old, you will understand that I am not likely to be hostile to the system which enables a number of men who have insufficient means of their own, to devote their time to unremunerative research. With reference to the "Protest against the great endowments of schools and Universities being applied as money rewards for learning either in the form of scholarships or fellowships, when they might be applied towards increasing the teaching power, etc," I might say a great deal, but have only space and time for a little. I would say first that as a rule in my experience scholarships and fellowships are not rewards for learning, but are endowments given to poor men on which they live, while they are pursuing their studies or prosecuting research. If you were to take the revenues now paid to Fellows, would you increase the teaching power by maintaining one Professor at the price of three or four Fellows? Even supposing the Professor were not superannuated and obstructive there would be no gain of teaching power, for at the present moment the majority of Fellows are engaged in teaching at their own University or elsewhere. In my own case the supply of teachers of my subjects at Oxford was so large that although I several times applied for work I could get none. As for scholarships, if they were abolished, the best students of Oxford and Cambridge would be removed, and the teachers substituted for them would either have no pupils or would have to go elsewhere to find them. The danger with regard to scholarships and fellowships is not that they are given according to the results of an examination, but that they may sometimes be given from private partiality, by cabalistic arrangements; that the examination system may be used as a pretence by influential and distinguished wirepullers.

With regard to Civil Service Examinations, I so far agree with your Protest that I think the present system has defects; not because the clerks or other officers are chosen by examination, but because the examination often has no proper relation to the duties the selected candidates are required to perform. But the present system is better than giving a man a post because he is connected with some one who has influence in government or departmental circles.

As for over-pressure, when it exists it is the fault of bad teachers and unwise parents, not of the examination system; although I grant that payment of teachers in proportion to the success of their pupils is pernicious.

## \* MR. A. SONNENSCHIEIN.

I would call attention to the following points :—

(a.) A good teacher must be wisely discursive; payment by results and external examinations punish every departure from the narrow line prescribed by the purpose in view; thus teaching becomes meagre, dry, and is deprived of all the warmth engendered by the teacher's spontaneity, which is now sternly repressed.

(b.) Not only is the teacher's spontaneity held in check, but he is deprived of freedom in choice of subjects, books, sequence, and correlation of studies.

(c.) Payment by results leads to the neglect of the better pupils in favour of the dullards; and even these are merely drilled (as Diesterweg expresses it "*abgerichtet*") and not taught, still less trained. The loss caused to the nation by the neglect of the talented children is probably the worst of the numerous evils entailed by our perverted system.

(d.) All great authorities on education (*e.g.* Herbert Spencer) demand that teaching be historical, *i.e.* inductive; this is admittedly as profitable to the pupil as it is unprofitable to the examinee. Polonius well crammed with rules, maxims and apophthegms would beat any Hamlet in the examination room.

(e.) In secondary schools (higher elementary education) examinations compel the teacher to deal in "straight tips," "short cuts," and other more or less dishonest artifices, and tempt him to base the reputation of his school on the few successful examinees to the neglect of the bulk of the remaining children. The exact reverse of the procedure in the elementary schools.

(f.) For many years England's highest intelligences have protested against the abuse of examinations. F. D. Maurice spoke of the ruined minds and bodies of our young people, and Professor de Morgan forty years ago showed in the plainest language what the results of examinations must be.

The fountain-heads of these ills are two :

1. We confuse two functions, which are wholly different and distinct, viz. : Inspection and Examination. The Inspector deals with processes for which the teacher is answerable; the Examiner with results for which the pupil is answerable.

2. Lord Sherbrooke (Mr. Robert Lowe) wanted to eliminate trust and confidence from our whole scheme of National Education. In all human relationships, even in commerce, which is avowedly



self-seeking, trust must be exercised; commerce is based on a vast system of credit; the endeavour to eliminate confidence from our educational system has been only too successful; it has lowered the tone of education and the moral character of our elementary teachers. All who remember what our elementary schools and teachers were before the introduction of Robert Lowe's Revised Code lament the deterioration in quality that has ensued. To every one of these allegations I can furnish ample illustrations.

*Remedies.*—1. No one proposes to do away with examinations altogether; a traveller might as well never stop to look back over the road he has travelled; a thinker might as well never endeavour to summarise and generalise the conclusions he has arrived at. Indeed examinations are indispensable, if merely to determine at the end of the year whether or not a pupil ought to be promoted to a higher class. But they must be conducted by the teacher himself under the supervision and with the co-operation of some duly constituted authority.

2. The teacher's interest must be rendered wholly independent of examination-results, and then his own promptings will naturally be towards greater severity. It is found as a rule that the assessors have to moderate the teacher's claims, because he obviously is anxious to exhibit the highest flights that his pupils ought to be able to attain; and he, of all men is best able to do so, because he is intimately acquainted with their limited field of knowledge, whilst the outside examiner is most likely to light upon their unlimited all-encircling field of ignorance. If the teacher's direct or indirect pecuniary interest is kept clear of examinations, his professional interest will cause him to lean to rigour, because he is anxious to give to his certificate the highest moral value; again his colleague in the class immediately above him would resent his pitch-forking into the higher class a pupil inadequately prepared. In the leaving examination (*"Abiturienten-prüfung"*) a considerable amount of maturity, of dominance of the different fields of study, of skill in manipulation, based on experience, may be expected, and therefore in this particular examination a larger share may be allotted to the external examiners.

3. The Government subsidy should be awarded to the school according to its needs as ascertained by a rigorous scrutiny of accounts. If the Department were to fix a certain proportion of the expenditure to be raised by School Boards out of the rates and

by Voluntary Schools from subscriptions, economy would be assured and the whole dispute between Voluntary and Board Schools would collapse. The Department would insist on the one indispensable condition: high-class teaching on the best methods.

4. Of course this entails the necessity of keeping inspection distinct from examination and of employing inspectors, who have given proof that they are real educationalists; no one will assert that this holds of all our present inspectors.

5. For the yearly examinations held by the teacher special examination commissioners must be appointed.

6. All visits by inspectors must be unannounced and made only for the purpose of testing and sanctioning methods. (Of course the inspector also looks to cleanliness, discipline, tone of school, etc., as is done now with everybody's approval.)

7. For the stimulus of grant-earning there should be substituted, (a) good reports on methods, etc., by inspectors; (b) promotion to ever higher and higher posts up to principalship of a training college and to the different grades of inspectorship; (c) *Per contra* punishment for failure, removal, or dismissal.

On the appointment of civil servants, Holland would, I believe, furnish a good precedent. When a vacancy occurs, Government asks the Professors of Universities to recommend suitable men. Of the several men thus nominated the past career is looked into and selection is made. This is certainly preferable to our scramble by crammed men. To this *rudis indigestaque moles* I could have added many more details and illustrations, but I was afraid to weary you, and forbore.

\* REV. M. KAUFMANN.

I enclose a letter by Privy Councillor Dr. Hans von Scheel, a well known Publicist and Economist in Germany, and a member of the Statistical Office in Berlin. Of competitive examinations in the English sense of the word, there are none in the 26 states of Germany, no one being so examined for any particular post. There are qualifying examinations which refer to given categories of posts, for which the successful examinee is eligible as they become vacant. But other considerations, besides passing, determine which of the successful aspirants is elected; *e.g.* in Law, after passing the necessary examination, a young man serves, as a rule, without stipend under some one else. He then acts as a deputy or *locum*

*tenens* for certain money considerations, filling up a gap, and finally may among others become a candidate for a judgeship, but his having passed a good examination is by no means the only qualifying cause for promotion. All sorts of reasons determine promotion, such as, age, general fitness and adaptability to local circumstances. The only case, he says, when competition in the English sense prevails, is in the appointment of ministers of religion, who are allowed to preach trial sermons, and those who are liked best by the local board or vestry are appointed by Government, all having passed the qualifying examination for the clerical office. But even here other circumstances are taken into consideration. "As for the idea of filling up offices in the State by means of competitive examinations," concludes my correspondent, "it seems to me so far fetched that I cannot imagine how such a proceeding could work in an intelligible manner." This from a high officer of State, a former Professor of Political Economy, and a writer of eminence in Germany.

#### DR. ASCHROTT.

*Obtained by Mr. C. S. Loch, of the Charity Organization Society.*

The nature of all examinations for appointing to official positions in Germany is of a qualifying character, *i.e.*, the examinations have in view the one object of ascertaining that the candidate has reached a certain standard of learning. After having passed the examination, the candidate receives a certificate stating the amount of his knowledge as proved by the examination; there are as a rule three degrees: excellent, good, fair. He then enters the service on probation. Generally only the minimum time of the probation is fixed by the rules, and the actual time may be much longer, if either there is no vacancy to be filled up, or the candidate does not receive the *certificate of practical efficiency* from the President of the school, board, or institution where he is admitted on probation. If there are, *e.g.*, five places to be given away, and twenty candidates for these places, who have all successfully finished their time of probation, the head of the department in making the appointment will take into consideration: (*a*) the degree that the candidate has received at the examination; (*b*) the certificate of the President of the school, board, or institution where the candidate has been on probation, and which must give a full account of his practical ability and

fitness. (It may be that according to this certificate a candidate may be well fitted for a position in a small town, but may not be the right man for a position in a city like Berlin.) If there are several candidates *of the same fitness* for one place that has to be given away, the candidate will be selected who has been in the service the longest time. I think I may state that the general opinion is that this system has worked well. There are sometimes complaints that there has been patronage with regard to an appointment, but I do not believe that, as a rule, there is much foundation for such complaints.

With regard to teachers, they have to serve a certain time on probation without any salary. During this time they attend the lessons given by the President of the school, and they themselves give instruction in the presence of the President, so that the latter is enabled to certify their ability in teaching. There are afterwards no special examinations held for the purpose of testing the work of the teachers; the *viva voce* examinations, that are held publicly yearly or half-yearly in the schools, are only to show the parents how far the pupils have profited by the instruction. But there is a supervision of the work of the teachers in two ways: (a) the President of the school and one of the School Inspectors are periodically present at the lessons given by the different teachers in order to ascertain their method and efficiency in teaching; (b) each school publishes yearly notes of the courses given by the respective teachers during the year.

A student has only to pass an examination at the end of his University time if he desires to obtain a degree. There are no other compulsory examinations at the Universities. In order to induce students to work industriously, the University gives yearly some prize-tasks, and the student who has sent in the best essay will receive a money reward. As a rule very few students compete for these prizes.

#### \* DR. ALFRED SENIER.

Teaching in this country is undoubtedly to a very large extent the slave of examination, whereas the two ought to be co-ordinate. Moreover, with regard to examination, a distinction ought to be made between those elements of an education which a mere examiner can fairly estimate, and those which can only be perceived by a teacher. Natural Science, for instance, is not a something com-

pleted and sharply defined, and a real acquaintance with it cannot be tested by a few questions and answers ;—no, it is always growing and has a frontier in all directions necessarily indefinite and obscure. In this borderland between the known and the unknown lie the points of greatest interest to the scientific enquirer, and some appreciation of it is essential to any true conception of science. Only the teacher who in the laboratory has felt his own enthusiasm reciprocated by his pupil can feel and estimate this.

During a recent sojourn of three years at the chief Prussian University, I have had opportunities of observing the system which has achieved so much success there. If not perhaps in all respects adapted to our own requirements, it indicates, in my opinion, the direction in which we ought to move. As is pretty well known, the main features of the system of University education to which I refer, are—a thorough training by very carefully selected teachers, which is seldom supplemented by private instruction, and a testing or examination of the students by the teachers themselves, or the chief amongst them, *i.e.*, the ordinary professors. This examination consists in the general supervision of an original enquiry, lasting often many months, and in passing judgment on the results, published together with a discussion of their theoretical bearings, and also in a *viva voce* questioning.

*Second Letter.*

So far as my observation extends, there are no important drawbacks to the Prussian system, by which the principal teachers in the Universities conduct the test examinations of the students whom they have themselves directly or indirectly instructed. The difficulty of favoritism is reduced to narrow limits by the great experience of the teachers who examine, and their desire, by sending out highly trained graduates, as well as by their own work, to add to the renown of the chair with which they are associated. But while this system seems so perfectly adapted to the requirements of Universities and large educational institutions well before the public, it may very probably require modification before it could be applied to the case of smaller schools or colleges of a less public nature, and where the same quality of teachers could not be expected. In these instances perhaps the examiner or examining-teacher might be made responsible for the quality of the teaching in several such institutions which would be under his supervision.

## FREE TRANSLATION OF LETTER FROM DR. A. SCHÄFFLE

(*Ex-Minister of Finance in Austria, &c.*), received through  
the Rev. M. Kaufmann.

In Würtemberg and in Austria, so far as I am acquainted with the latter country, "*qualifying competition*" prevails alike in the Civil Service, in the Educational Department, and even in Church appointments. The lower posts in the Civil Service are almost exclusively bestowed on discharged soldiers who in time of service obtained a good character. It is a rare exception that any one is appointed to the offices of the State without previously having passed a *public examination* after a course of three years' study. Further advancement depends on a certificate of qualification depending on the manner of passing these public examinations. In Würtemberg there are three classes or grades with sub-classes, *e.g.*, Ia, Ib, IIa, IIb, IIIa, IIIb, into which the successful candidates are divided. The lowest of these must have been passed at least, and those persons qualifying for the higher ministerial and collegiate appointments must have passed the higher classes Ia—IIb. But the certificate of having passed is only the groundwork for promotion. To have given some proof of practical competency in service is of considerable importance, so that the highest offices may be filled by men so qualified, though they have only passed in a lower grade, *e.g.*, Class II., in Würtemberg. It depends on the decision of the Authorities (Departments) and the opinion of appointing collegiate bodies, or commissions, or the Minister himself in the case of middle or higher posts of administration. When the candidates are equal in other respects, age decides the choice. The two pillars on which the whole system of appointments rests are: the regulations for the examination, and the judgment of the collegiate bodies appointed for the purpose of proposing the most suitable candidate.

As far as the examinations are concerned, the arrangements in Würtemberg, perhaps the most perfect in all Germany, are as follows: The examinations are divided into two parts, with, as a rule, a year or two between them, after which, according to proficiency or seniority, appointments are made. A period of practical but unpaid service intervenes between the first and second, which gives time to the aspirants to prove their efficiency and zeal, and the result of this period of probation, on which the

superiors report, together with the result of the second or final examination, has most weight. In the previous examination the theoretical or scientific competency of the candidates is tested, in the latter their practical adaptability. . . . Practical "cases" are put before the examinee, and on the manner he acquits himself in dealing with them his capacity for "practical administration" is estimated. In both, the examination is by means of written papers and oral work before the College of Examiners; men of theory, scientific specialists, headed by a Government Commissioner,—appointed to read the papers,—and scientifically trained members of the respective services examine in the second examination. The results are then given according to the grade obtained, but modified by the general impression produced by the candidate on those who have to judge of his proficiency.

\* \* \* \* \*

As the result of experience in some thirty examinations of this kind, I believe I may say that not one out of some hundreds of examinees was unjustly dealt with, nor that a single certificate was made out by the authorities which was not exactly in conformity with the facts.

\*YVES GUYOT.

La protestation est juste : si elle est juste en Angleterre, à plus forte raison l'est elle en France, où nous sommes tous des petits Mandarins, qui n'avons la permission de devenir quelquechose qu'après avoir été broyés par un tas de laminoirs, qu'on appelle des examens et des concours, et tout est demandé à la mémoire, rien au jugement; où le mieux noté est celui qui a le mieux retenu la leçon du maître et n'a jamais pensé pour lui-même.

#### EXAMINATIONS IN FRANCE.

*(This statement has been kindly obtained through a friend).*

In the principal public offices of the French Government admission to the public service is by competitive examination. The regulations differ in the different Ministries, but the general system is the same throughout. The competition is limited to French citizens, of the prescribed age (in most Departments between 20 and 30), who have passed through the regular course of study in a French University or Public School. In proof of their competency

in this respect candidates must produce a diploma or other certificate showing that they have obtained the Degree of *Licencié en Droit*, or *Bachelier ès sciences* or *ès lettres*, or the Degree conferred by the *École des Chartes* (a college connected with the National Archives), or that they have successfully passed the final examination in one of the following public schools:—*École Normale Supérieure*, *École Polytechnique*, *École Nationale des Mines*, *École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées*, *École Nationale des Arts et Manufactures*, *École Forestière*, *École Spéciale Militaire*, *École Navale*, *École des Sciences Politiques*, *École des Hautes Études Commerciales*, or any superior Commercial College recognized by the Government or by the National Agricultural Institute.

The list of Schools and Colleges varies slightly according to the Department of the Government in which service is sought. Candidates must also have performed their military service at the time they present themselves.

The Minister of the Department for which the examination is to be held draws up a list of candidates fulfilling the required conditions. Absolute power is reserved to him to exclude political opponents, but this power, which is pretty severely exercised in the Ministry of the Interior, is seldom employed in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and in the other Departments of the Government.

In the Ministries of the Interior and of Marine and the Colonies, one-fourth and one-fifth respectively of the vacant places are filled up by the Minister at his own discretion and without any examination whatever.

The Ministers are thus invested with ample power of eliminating objectionable candidates, and of dispensing patronage to their friends without a test of special competency.

The number of places vacant in the Public Offices is published annually in the *Journal Officiel* some months before the competitive examinations are held.

After examination the vacant places are filled up in the order of merit of the various candidates as shown by the results of the examination.

It is held by the French authorities that the method sketched out above secures the required number of suitable candidates, who are likely, in view of their success in accomplishing their school or university careers, to render good service to the State. It is claimed



that this system avoids the evils of an unrestricted competition, without any condition of previous study, and that sufficient power is left to the authorities to exclude undesirable candidates, even if these have passed the required school or college tests.

\* MR. W. E. HALL, ON THE BELGIAN CIVIL SERVICE.

There are two classes of clerks, copyist and superior. Appointments to both classes are made by nomination, checked by test examination. Nomination to the copyist class is made by the heads of departments, that to the superior class by the Minister within whose province the office is. Promotion within the copyist class is made by the heads of departments upon the report of the immediate superiors of the clerks, available for promotion. Transfer from the copyist to the superior class may be, and occasionally in cases of exceptional merit, is made by the Minister on the recommendation of a head of department. Within the superior class, promotion is made by the Minister—as a matter of general practice, on the recommendation of the heads of departments; but he may, if he chooses, make any promotion that seems good to him. All promotions up to the grade of premier commis (the premier commis being about one in five of the total number of clerks) are accompanied by a test examination. None of the examinations either for entry or promotion are difficult, and their object is simply to establish that the candidate is capable of performing the particular duties attached to the grade which he seeks to enter; they are special, and in no way aim at testing his general acquirements or his general intelligence. The hardest part of the most advanced examination consists in a paper on constitutional law and administrative law as affecting the office to which the clerk belongs, and of a draught circular or report upon some subject connected with the business of the office. Promotion from the grade of premier commis is made solely at the will of the Minister.

It appears that this system gives sufficiently satisfactory results. The clerks are competent for their work, and promotions are generally made fairly,—the Belgian Civil Service being pervaded by a strong feeling of responsibility and honourable obligation. Nominations to the superior class are naturally obtained largely by political influence, and are given in the main to the relations of persons known to be supporters of the party in power; but political considerations have not generally been allowed to affect promotions.

When once a young man has entered an office, he can only expect to rise more quickly than in due order of seniority by showing exceptional merit. The chief evil under which the Belgian Civil Service suffers is that heads of departments are too reluctant to recommend that men should be passed over the heads of others, and that consequently promotions are made too much by seniority and too infrequently by merit.

*Railways, Mines, Ponts et Chaussées.*—Employés of the superior class in these departments are chosen from persons who have attended special courses of study, and there is an examination in the subjects so learnt, for entrance into the service. It is the invariable practice, but it is not an obligatory rule, to give appointments to the three who pass highest in the year, but further appointments are not necessarily made in the order of examination merit. Suppose, for example, that there were four vacancies, the fifth or sixth would not infrequently be taken instead of the fourth or fifth, upon the report of the professors as to conduct and general aptitude. Promotion is made upon the reports of the Departmental superiors. The results obtained in these departments are fully satisfactory.

#### M. EMILE DE LAVELEYE.

In Belgium as in France examinations for gaining official posts exist, but, except in the case of Government Engineers and of military cadets, preference is not necessarily given to those whose names stand highest on the list.

To obtain a post in the Magistracy, a barrister's diploma is required; in order to become an official in the Post Office, Railway, or Telegraph services, a trifling special examination is obligatory.

With regard to the nomination of Elementary and Second Grade Teachers—such persons do qualify by means of an examination, but the minister in whose hands the appointments rest, is not bound to nominate the winners of the highest marks.

University lecturers are nominated by the minister, who may choose whomsoever he likes. The minister here is too often influenced in his choice by political considerations.

For the most part advancement is not by examination. Seniority and Inspectors' reports are taken into consideration. In every department a Deputy's recommendation of a candidate has great weight, but in Belgium we have escaped the annoyance of being bound down to any established system.

Our late King strongly objected to officials using their position as a means of influence, and owing to this the Governors of Provinces—the special representatives of the Government—are habitually respected.

In Primary and Secondary education, the children's interest in their work is secured by the passing of examinations year by year.

Since with us the love of knowledge for knowledge's sake is little developed, I believe examinations to be indispensable.

In Germany there is a law which prevents any official being replaced except by the decree of his peers in a specially appointed court. The office is an estate to its occupant. This I hold to be an excellent arrangement.

The American system—victors in the matter of spoils—run to death in Roumania and Bulgaria, I abhor.

Observe how in certain Swiss cantons these different evils are avoided, but the cure is not to be found ready at hand.

#### PROFESSOR A. BAIN, ABERDEEN.

I have been for many years both teacher and examiner, and I had, as a young student, to undergo the ordeal of the college examinations for class prizes, Scholarships, and the Degree, as practised in the Aberdeen University half a century ago. It so happened that, a little before my time in that University, the Degree Examination had been converted from a farce to a serious test of merit. The candidates had to undergo examination in seven subjects (Latin, Greek, Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Natural History, Moral Philosophy, Evidences of Christianity) on as many successive days. The novelty of the proceeding put the system of examination itself on its trial, and revealed both its weak and its strong points, just as they are known at the present day. The first weakness was the hasty cram at the last minute, instead of the deliberate appropriation of all the subjects as the teaching went on. Of course this was followed by an equally hasty forgetfulness of a portion of the knowledge that had been produced on examination day. The second weakness was the saving of laborious preparation by ingeniously circumventing the examiners, through a close study of their habits and proclivities. So thoroughly typical and representative are these two defects,

that in stating my conclusions regarding them, I cover a large part of the debateable ground that we are now engaged upon. To put the matter as shortly as possible, I will take the last mentioned first, because it partly embraces the other. If I were asked how I behaved under my seven examiners, with a view to the best result at the least cost, I should say that, as regards four, if not five, out of the seven, there was but one road to success, namely, to master equally the whole course of teaching in each class. So well selected were the questions sure to be, that no safe calculation could be made as to what would probably be given, or what would probably be omitted, on the occasion. With the two remaining subjects I grant that some amount of dodging was possible, and of course we dodged accordingly.

Next as regards the hasty preparation at the end. With a series of a hundred and fifty lectures, and with no clue to omissions, a few days' cram at the end was quite unavailing. To pass a high examination, under a competent examiner, the knowledge must be sufficiently ingrained to survive the examination, and indeed to last one's life, should there be occasion for reverting to it. Of course, there is such a thing as a scrape pass that does not survive, but so worthless is it there and then, that its persistence does not much signify. Whoever can obtain a good mediocre position, with a proper examiner, will, in my opinion, keep a hold of the subject for a considerable time after; although naturally, in the case of disuse, it must in the long run decline, if not entirely perish.

As regards Aberdeen University, now attended by upwards of nine hundred students, I am not aware of there being any examination that could be dispensed with or materially shortened. We have still defects in our curriculum, but taking it as it stands, the examinations that accompany the teaching and otherwise are absolutely necessary to do justice to the students. There is no complaint as to injury to their health. The instances of a break-down in bodily constitution are chiefly confined to those very ambitious youths who carve out a future for themselves by means of University distinctions alone. To come up prepared at the entrance for gaining a valuable bursary, such as to cover fees and maintenance for four years; to carry off the large money prizes at graduation; to obtain the still more valuable scholarships subsequent to the degree; to add to these a Ferguson scholarship,

where candidates have to be encountered from the three other Universities; to obtain a scholarship in Cambridge in addition, so as to earn a three years' maintenance there; to become eventually a first or second wrangler—while, in the majority of cases, all this is gone through without serious detriment to health, there are some that utterly break down, and even die of the long-continued strain. There is no legislative remedy for such a fatality. It may be bewailed in the fine language of Adam Smith's celebrated passage on "the poor man's son whom Heaven "in the hour of her anger has smitten with ambition," but it cannot be met by any change of system on our part. Whoever ventures on such an enterprise should first have the assurance of possessing both physical and mental endowments of the very first quality.

I believe that a similar strain of remarks would apply to the other Scottish Universities. I am not prepared to speak of Oxford and Cambridge. I only say that, as regards Scotland, the Universities are not, in my opinion, open to the general charge of abusing examinations in the various ways mentioned in the Protest. I do not mean, however, to say that this exhausts the points at issue. One very material circumstance has to be noticed as regards our examinations, namely, that as a rule they are conducted by the teachers themselves. Not merely the daily exercises of the class, and the examinations for prizes and certificates at the end of each course, but also the examinations for the degree, for honours, and for the valuable scholarships, are carried out almost exclusively by the several professors. Under the Act of 1858, there were instituted a certain number of extra-academical examiners, who co-operate with the professors in the degree examinations, but their co-operation is practically of very little moment. They do not control the teaching, but take their cue from what each professor sees fit to prelect upon. The sole instance where one man examines upon what another man teaches is the case of the Ferguson Scholarship, where only by an occasional coincidence does an examiner operate upon his own pupils. Here, then, we encounter the serious bone of contention at the present time. How far the subjection of a teacher to an independent examiner is a good or an evil, and if an evil, how is this to be remedied, is what chiefly demands our consideration. The allegation that the teacher is degraded, crippled, and emasculated, by having to

subordinate his whole plan of tuition to the dictation of another man," perhaps his inferior, is too serious to be lightly dismissed.

Granting that a teacher is most zealous and effective when he can choose his subject and his method of teaching, we are met by some formidable difficulties if we assert that he should be entirely exempted from control. In former days one notorious cause of the inefficiency of our education was the autocracy of the teachers. There was nothing to prevent a man either from departing from his subject altogether, or from the grossest disproportion in the handling. So able a mathematical teacher as De Morgan was greatly offended with the Council of University College because he could not obtain permission to substitute Formal Logic for a portion of his mathematical course. But to come closer to the point. Is a teacher necessarily put out of his way by having to prepare pupils for examination by another man? I answer not, if the examiner has his field properly laid out, and works it fairly. If both teacher and examiner substantially agree upon the topics suitable to be included in the subject, there ought to be no friction in the case. It is inevitable that there should be some difference between the two in the stress laid upon special topics; yet this should not interfere with the individuality of either, beyond a certain allowable measure. A man cannot serve two masters: he may, however, serve one, and yet have a certain liberty for himself. I have been a teacher for many years, and never found much difficulty in reconciling my own preferences with outside demands. Doubtless much depends on the wisdom of the outside party. Outrageous and absurd requirements may be made; these must be dealt with by a suitable remonstrance and exposure. For the generality of teachers some check or control is indispensable; the interference with a supremely capable individual is not to be put in comparison with the evils of unlimited license.

I must farther take some exception to the terms employed in describing the injury to the pupil by forcing upon him repugnant tasks, thereby chilling his ardour for what he would naturally take delight in. This is even more questionable than the according of licence to the teacher. In the first place, according to my experience, a very large number of our pupils in the higher walks of education have no avidity for anything in the nature of a severe study, such as the sciences, and the dry parts of language. In the next place, it is common enough to find among our youth a taste and devotion

for some one of the topics of a pretty wide curriculum accompanied with an indifference, often amounting to aversion, for everything else. One great objection to the narrow exclusiveness of the old system in the English Universities was, that men could be found who were total idlers when their choice was limited to Classics and the hardest Mathematics, but were yet capable of being quickened to enthusiasm by the Natural and Experimental Sciences. Of such was Charles Darwin. Yet this narrowness needs to be fought against. A pupil should not be left to his own choice as to what is ultimately for his good on the whole. Even genius, to be effective, must condescend to learn many things that are dry at the outset. An anecdote in recent circulation is in point here. Mr. Gladstone, it is said, when at Oxford, intended to devote himself to Classics exclusively. His father, on the other hand, urged that he should take up Mathematics likewise, which he did, and thereby laid the foundation of his success as financier, besides reaping other valuable fruits. As another example, I may refer to Mill's deliberate opinion, given in his Autobiography, that every youth needs to be under wholesome compulsion to learn many things that he has no natural liking for. The moral of all this is that a curriculum of liberal study should, by its width, secure an amount of culture far beyond the individual likings of the very best pupils; while an adequate examination should make this a *sine qua non* of a University or other stamp of intellectual proficiency.

#### THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

I do not feel that I have had sufficient means of personal observation to enable me to form any very definite or decided opinion on the effect of the examination system on higher education. I have, however, a great distrust of it. It was invented to get rid of the political difficulties connected with patronage, and it was introduced under a title or name which assumes the whole question in dispute. In primary education it is called "payment by results," which sounds unassailably excellent, until we remember that everything must depend on the kind of "results" which are secured. So far as primary education is concerned, I fear that evidence is accumulating to the effect that the "results" arising are (1) an overburdened memory, (2) a weakened brain, and (3) an early with-

drawal of children from all discipline of education,—an early withdrawal from school altogether.

As regards higher education, it has always seemed to me that examinations on which so much is made to depend, and which are so fixed in date, have an inevitable tendency to become mechanical and highly artificial. They must set up standards of attainment largely depending on the idiosyncracies of examiners, and therefore not by any means sure of testing the highest and most useful intellectual powers of those who are subjected to them. The apportionment of a particular number of “marks” to some corresponding degree of success in answering unknown questions, whether in speech or writing, is a process so largely “*subjective*” as regards the examiners, that I cannot conceive it attaining any satisfactory “results.”

My distrust of examinations conducted on such methods would not necessarily imply any distrust of other methods of testing comparative ability: so that I do not in the least feel to be on the horns of a dilemma between the present system and a reversion to Patronage pure and simple. Yet this is the “scare” which is often held up to us when we venture to express our doubts of the present system.

\* MR. E. BUDDEN.

My first answer to the statement alluded to, “a man can’t cram mathematical problems,” is that it is untrue. At Oxford, lectures are devoted to the working out of problems; at Cambridge, a man who is likely to be a high wrangler is as carefully trained as a horse running for the Derby; and so well is the thing done at Cambridge that the first four or five wranglers can often be placed in order before the examination. May I again remind you of a college tutor who carefully worked out the whole of the previous ten years’ papers for Mathematical Mods. at Oxford; and so exhausted almost the whole range of problems up to the Mods. standard.†

† I have mathematical books carefully marked O. and R. (omit and read) by my tutor—and this not on a preliminary reading of the book merely, but as finally getting it up for an honours examination. I don’t think we Oxford people are quite as bad as the Cambridge men in the matter. I think the story of the arithmetic or algebra paper at the last Sandhurst examination a splendid *reductio ad absurdum*. One question did not admit of solution, and therefore all the candidates had to be examined again.



The evil as regards mathematics is obvious ; men are carefully trained in working problems, and dare not spend any time in really *studying* mathematics. Very few English mathematicians reach the first rank for this very reason. The case of a personal friend is a very sad one as regards examinations. He was the only real mathematician I have come across ; he pursued it as a study which he loved, and at a very early age became a very learned mathematician. He did brilliantly at Oxford, though averse to problems and examinations generally. His college, instead of offering him a fellowship (which they did to a classical cotemporary) invited him up, after he had been two or three years at hard school work, to an examination for a fellowship. He, although he had been doing some very remarkable work, had not kept himself up in examination tips, and felt it would be useless to sit ; and in the end his school work gradually killed him. I am quite sure that he would have done splendid work at Oxford ; and he is the one man I have ever met whom a fellowship would not have spoiled,—I mean he was a real student, and that is what examinations tend to kill.

In school work our mathematics have become abominably stereotyped. All our mathematics are taught so that the best boys may get Cambridge scholarships. The consequence is that an average lad who has not any special capacity for problems learns very little mathematics at all. This is particularly hard on science students. The latter want the Binomial theorem (as a result) and simple theory of equations, simple mensuration, a few theorems in trigonometry, and a few elementary facts in the differential and integral calculus. These they cannot get except by going through the Cambridge scholarship grind. This to me is a most serious blot in our school mathematics ; and the examinations are a principal bar to any progress in the matter.

Euclid is still in England the text book on geometry (though rejected for years on the Continent), because at Cambridge it is still set in the Tripos papers. Returning once more to the matter of problems,—boys are definitely trained in the knack of doing problems ; some acquire it naturally, or possess it already ; but very few boys (hardly one per cent.) of scholarship standard could give the *complete* proof of any theorem in algebra (including *all* theory of number) or geometry,—I mean the proof step by step from first principles or assumption up to the theorem proved.

## LORD THRING.

I have read the able manifesto you have sent to me with great attention. I agree with a great part of your argument, but your conclusions are so sweeping that I cannot possibly sign the Protest. The best system of education is necessarily (as I think) an insoluble problem. Theoretically almost every human being would require to be brought up in a different manner adapted to his rank in life, his character, his future prospects. To produce such a variety of systems is absurd; therefore we must endeavour to secure the next best thing—that is, a sufficiently varied and graduated plan or rather plans of education to meet the wants of the greatest number of each of the marked divisions of English social life. How this object can be obtained involves the consideration of certain abstract rules.

1. *Il faut vivre*,—the first necessity in all cases, except that of the richest class, is to fit a man to earn his living.
2. Education has two separate, though not distinct, functions; (a) to impart knowledge, (b) to sharpen the intellect so that it may be capable of rapidly acquiring knowledge.
3. The number of persons desirous or capable of acquiring knowledge for its own sake only is in this work-a-day world (*me judice*) very small. The poor, *i.e.* all who have to earn their living by handicraft, or head-craft, cannot afford the time to acquire more than the rudiments of general knowledge for its own sake; the rich, those born with a silver spoon in their mouths, are usually too indolent, too stupid, or too much occupied with ambition to play the part of the learned philosopher. Starting from these premises (brutal you will deem them) I agree that a great reform is required in the elementary schools. The system of forcing both pupils and teachers is most unreasonable, and, worst of all, the teaching is often ill-adapted to comply with my first requisition of enabling the taught to earn their living. On the other hand, I would wish some avenue to be opened by which children of extraordinary talent might rise out of their natural class, and this, I think, might be done by a judicious distribution of scholarships to be competed for by a number of local schools. With respect to technical trade education, I have not sufficient knowledge to give my opinion. With respect to the education of my own class I admit that undue competition for scholarships is a great evil, but I think it is in some degree a necessary evil. In former days knowledge was flogged into boys—in these days it is introduced by means of prizes and rewards. I do not believe in your inherent love of knowledge. To

my mind it is, it must be, put into boys at all events,—I do not say anything as to the other sex,—by some stimulus applied behind or before. On the other hand, I quite agree that competition has its great accompanying evils. Sometimes, though rarely, I think boys are so overpressed in early life that, from laziness or want of strength, they droop and become useless. Sometimes—also, I think, rarely—excitable boys are injured, not morally, I think, but physically. As to the effect of competition in the public departments, my answer is that it is better than jobbery, and that I have never heard of any practicable substitute. I admit that the examinations require great amendment, but that, I think, could be effected without destroying the system. I have written this long letter in order to show you that I have not neglected your appeal. I wish my brother, the late Head of Uppingham, were alive—he would have agreed almost entirely. I have purposely only dealt with education in its secular and not its (most important) religious aspect.

#### MR. P. MATHESON.

The sum of the matter seems to me to be this—for most men examinations, with the systematic teaching they involve, are rather bracing and helpful than otherwise; a few men of special ability here and there might do better without them, but if they manage themselves wisely (and to do this, too, is a part of education) there is no reason why examination should do them serious harm. With regard to endowments, I think that scholarships have opened schools and Universities to many men who would otherwise have been excluded from them. The only possible alternative, it seems to me, is a system of completely free education, which at present, at least, is hardly practicable. Fellowships may be more open to question; but if Colleges, as centres of study and education, are to be maintained, some means must be adopted for continuing the society. This is done now partly, but not by any means wholly, by competitive examination; and I do not think it is easy to devise a better way. To be quite frank, I think that perhaps we do not leave men quite enough to themselves in Oxford to-day; but here again I think that the average man gains by getting more methodical teaching than in old days, though a few gifted men may feel hampered; but even for the latter class, who are few enough, the discipline is by no means altogether bad.

## \* MR. S. DILL.

I heartily sympathise with the object of the paper, and I shall be happy to sign it. Experience, more especially of late years, has given me a profound distrust of our present system of governing education by examinations. The physical evil is very apparent particularly in young boys from Elementary Schools, where the master depends for his very bread on his getting a certain amount of work out of his pupils. And I am glad to see that the better teachers are convinced of the fact, and are striving to have the system of payment by results abolished. I am not sure that among the richer classes the opposite evil of excessive devotion to bodily training is not doing as much harm in another way, though in fashionable schools the rage for athletics will in our time be a powerful check on the tendency to overwork of the brain. At the Universities the moral and intellectual results are the most striking and the most injurious. It is quite true, as the paper says, and as the late Rector of Lincoln long since pointed out, that the concentration of the powers on the winning of prizes always weakens, and often destroys, disinterested love of knowledge. We shall never have really learned Universities, in the highest sense, until the system is modified. It is only by a *θεία τύχη* that the best minds retain any freshness and interest in things of the mind after going through the examination mill.

But I regard this question of examinations as only a part of the much larger question—is the Government going to organise on a rational basis our English Secondary Education? My conviction is that you can only effectually remedy the present evils by setting up a central authority—guided by the best experience and intelligence—which, in concert with local bodies, shall regulate instruction and examinations. It is chiefly owing to the want of such a system that examinations have been allowed to usurp such an excessive importance in this country. People suppose that if a certain proportion of pupils pass the measuring test, the education given may be deemed satisfactory, and that in the competitive struggle, so dear to Englishmen, the badly taught schools will be killed off. Unfortunately the Universities, by their Local Examinations, have given their powerful support to this view. So we go on, adding examination to examination, in the belief that the results of education can be weighed and

reckoned as if they were bales of goods. Even among our educational reformers there are few who see that what we wish a boy to acquire at school is not so much a certain amount of knowledge as "the orderly development of his faculties *under good and trained teachers*." And this is a conception that I fear our middle class, left to itself, will not attain for a long time. They will go on, as at present, under the spur of practical needs, giving another and another turn to the examination screw, in the vain hope that in this way they may secure really good training.

I know that many thoughtful persons fear that the action of the State will produce monotonous uniformity and prevent the free action of mind on mind, which is the main thing in any education worthy of the name. I can only say that I do not believe State control at its worst could be so deadening as the teaching of prescribed matter solely with a view to a particular examination. And if we take care to have the right kind of experience and intelligence in the Secondary Education Department, the fear of these results will prove to be groundless. Mr. Arnold has shewn that the Prussian system leaves a great deal of freedom to the masters of Gymnasien and the local Councils, and from a considerable acquaintance with Germans trained at these schools, I should say that there is a great deal of individuality in the teaching. The masters are only permitted to give lessons in a subject in which they have proved their competence. They are therefore, if they are able and earnest men, sure to teach with confidence, freedom, and individuality. Moreover the Leaving Examination, which is the gateway to the Universities, the professions, and generally to public life in Germany, is so arranged as not to tempt candidates "to special preparation and effort, but "to be such as a scholar of fair ability and proper diligence may "at the end of his school course come to with a quiet mind, and "without a painful preparatory effort tending to relaxation and "torpor as soon as the effort is over." How far we are from such an ideal as this!

\* REV. E. STONE.

I am delighted to find that the country is waking up to the discovery that a huge Juggernaut has been laboriously erected, to which helpless children are yearly sacrificed, and that those who escape with their lives are too often maimed and disabled for their

future career. The play of individual character which has been the salvation of England, must not be weakened by this levelling tendency, this crushing iron roller, which produces such an admirably uniform surface where nature intended variety. I am thankful that my education, however faulty, left me plenty of leisure time, and was not careful to account triumphantly for every hour of the day. The reign of common sense is, I hope, coming in again, and the *doctrinaire* is yielding the field. Human nature is weak, and favouritism is bad; but a system based on a recognition of this weakness, and professing to mend it by artificial means is worse still. I have long thought that a universal pass examination, with a power given to heads of departments to select from those who have passed, aided by such sort of examination as an expert in the particular office or employment could give in an informal way, would be at least an experiment worth trying. I feel so much the mischief done to little boys by training for scholarships that I consistently refuse to prepare specially for them. The art of the trainer is directed to one limited and definite result, and the more skilfully he does his work the less chance the growing boy has of developing his full nature. I have good reasons to think that one at least of the Commissioners for the revision of the Eton Statutes looks with some misgivings on the effect of the abolition of a property qualification, and the admission of boys to compete, however wealthy their parents may be. I think this was a move in the wrong direction, and only defensible on the score that it is difficult to draw the line. As a fact poor men are now handicapped by being unable to afford to get their boys educated at the very successful schools, where coaching for scholarships is a regular business. I should apply here the same principle as I have advocated above; let there be a pass examination, and then let the authorities choose their scholars, special regard being had to the circumstances of the parent.

*Second Letter.*

What I feel strongly is that we are short-sighted, and judge by present results; and even there we are purblind, and confine our view to the successful candidates. I have just made an acquaintance here of a man who was *Scoonesed and Wrenned*, and failed of his Indian Civil Service appointment by thirty marks. He was told that he was not very bright, and would have to work hard, and he sat up working till 1 a.m. night after night. He tells me that the present system of examining at 19 instead of 21 has made

matters a great deal worse, as there is less power at the younger age to endure the strain, and that two or three deaths have already happened among the most promising recent candidates. I am sure this is no sentimental grievance; the future of our race depends upon its removal; we are sapping the very life blood of the nation. The natives of India of course see, sharp witted as they are, that they have got a different class of men to deal with, and they will fancy presently that we are degenerating into the Bengali type.

One point of great importance would be secured by a system of pass examinations. It would extinguish "rights" and substitute "duties." To give a young man a right to draw a certain salary in his country's service is not the best way to secure loyal and dutiful servants, and it hampers the authorities should he prove unfit. I am sure that on all grounds, moral as well as economical, it is a serious mistake.

\* MRS. S. S. BURTON.

If the moral tone of boys is lowered by their place in the examinations becoming the chief aim in their school work, how much more must the character of girls deteriorate! The one idea "What will pay?" tends to make them mercenary, grasping, selfish—most detestable qualities in a woman, whose usefulness and happiness are in proportion to her forgetfulness of self and ready devotion to the interests of those whose lives are mixed up with hers.

PROFESSOR J. E. SYMES, UNIV. COLL., NOTTINGHAM.

I am sorry to say that, though I agree with much of the Protest, I cannot sign it as it stands. Those who have drawn it up would in my opinion do well to deal with separate parts of the question separately. On some points they should collect statistical evidence, especially as to effects of High School education on physique of girls, *e.g.*, of those who throw themselves into it most heartily and successfully. On some points there seems to me sufficient ground for aiming at definite changes, especially at abolition of the pupil teacher system in Elementary Schools. The drain on these young people, who are expected

to cram for examination, and also to spend so much energy in teaching, must, I think, have most deplorable results.

It may also be laid down as a general principle that examination should follow teaching, instead of teaching having to be subordinated to examination.

I should also be prepared to condemn a system of great prizes—as fellowships—and of prizes offered to quite young children (entrance scholarships at public schools, &c.), and to support proposals to spend more of available funds upon teaching teachers and paying competent ones better, and abolishing “payment by results” in Elementary Schools. But I cannot see my way at present to supporting abolition of appointments to Civil Service, &c., by competition, nor do some of the other suggestions commend themselves to me. On the whole, though I earnestly join you in desiring that some thought and enquiry should be directed to the points you raise, I do not feel disposed to sign the memorial.

#### *Second Letter.*

##### DESIRABLE MODIFICATIONS OF COMPETITIVE SYSTEM.

(1.) *That in Schools, teachers should, as a rule, examine their own classes.*—The opposite system acts as a stimulus to lazy teachers; but it greatly hampers originality and deprives the teacher of the advantage of seeing for himself where he has failed. There might still be examinations by outsiders at distant intervals; but the common practice of setting masters to examine one another’s forms should be abolished; and even when outside examiners are called in they should only do enough to enable them to report on the teaching. The bulk of the examining should still be done by the masters themselves.

(2.) *The Competitive System should be completely swept away in the giving of Fellowships at Oxford and Cambridge.*—Fellowships should be given for original work. When a man has been working for some years for his degree it is good for him to apply his knowledge to some original investigation. His undergraduate studies would be conducted on better principles if he knew that he would have to so apply his knowledge if he wanted to get a Fellowship.

(3.) *The Competitive System should also be swept away in the selection of boys for the Foundation of Public Schools, &c.*—The present system unduly injures those whose parents cannot afford to give them an expensive preparatory training. The system works



injuriously in many ways, and I should prefer a careful system of nomination.

(4.) *In the Universities it is desirable that Professors should have more share in setting the papers.*—The scandal and absurdity of eminent professors lecturing to empty benches, while the teaching is done by less eminent tutors would thus be mitigated. Self-interest would induce undergraduates to attend the lectures of those who are to set a large part of the examination papers.

\* REV. J. BELL HENDERSON.

To examine is, as I understand, to test or prove, its object being to ascertain how far the examinee has profited by the educational methods to which he has been subjected. Now it is in the application of this test that so much harm is done. Both at school and University does a personal experience tell us that much that is most disastrous to true education is paraded before parents, guardians and friends as educational success.

I have seen young men gain high honours in Natural Science, take medals, for instance, in botany, who yet could not tell a wall-flower from a dandelion; others I have known to take a degree in classics and yet be unable to translate the simplest sentence *ad aperturam*, while it is an indisputable fact that not twenty per cent. of our University students could pass the examination for the degree, which twelve months previously they succeeded in obtaining.

\* J. H. ALDRIDGE, M.D.

My experience of examinations is that where there is payment by results, they are little better than cramming matches. During last year I had one head teacher whose mind nearly gave way under the work of her school, and some six or seven others who suffered from various complaints, chiefly of a nervous character, producing anæmia. One little girl died of meningitis.

I think there is room for very great improvement in our methods of teaching; for instance, I see no reason why reading, writing, and spelling should be separate subjects. They may be taken along with other subjects, where each or all of these may be required. The pupil teachers' classes may be made much more interesting than they are; instead of learning by heart a long list of the names of rivers,

mountains, and towns, the principal of such might be much more thoroughly fixed in the mind by being associated with some interesting event, etc. Give children an interest in their subjects by the manner in which those subjects are handled, and you lessen the work by half. Even arithmetic may be made pleasant.

\* MR. C. S. LOCH.

In the school referred to in the enclosed prospectus, the non-competitive system of teaching is, I think, being carried on very successfully. There are no prizes. The classes are marked as a whole, so that it is the object of the scholars to get a good class-position, and individual rivalry is thus superseded by an endeavour to reach a common standard. The better teaching makes the competition unnecessary—so it appears to me; for though competition may serve as a stimulus to the more industrious, it often leaves the average pupil who is in the lower part of the class quite indifferent, while the teacher, instead of relying on his power of imparting instruction to interest the scholars individually, is tempted to trust to their spirit of emulation to make good his own defects. Thus competition may even become a stumbling block in the way of the better teaching.

On the other hand there are practical difficulties. Parents like prizes; and the public schools in regard to scholarships insist on conditions with which it is difficult to comply without undue pressure in certain directions. Thus Greek can be more quickly learnt by a boy after grounding in French and Latin, and we begin with French and go on to Latin, and then would take Greek, when the rudiments of Latin have been thoroughly learnt. At their entrance examinations at public schools and subsequently our boys have done very well, though sometimes they have had to receive special instruction in Greek. But the plan does not fit in with the requirements of public schools as regards scholarships. For them Greek and Latin must practically be taken together, if at the age of twelve or earlier the boy is to be brought up to the set standard.

As to these scholarships, so long as they are open to the children of the average English parent they will be snapped up, simply because they give the successful candidate a prestige, which is shared by the family, and make a considerable addition

to the family income. Most scholarships were intended, I believe, for poor scholars, the children of poor parents, and it should be generally recognised that they are available for them only. The method of selection should be (1) an honest inquiry in regard to the parents' means, and (2) a qualifying examination; and the scholarships should also, I think, so far as may be possible, be variable in amount according to the ascertained circumstances of the parents. The selectors should form a judgment in each instance on two questions, the candidate's suitability from the educational, and his suitability from the charitable point of view. All this would cause trouble, no doubt, but not more than may reasonably be demanded of those who administer an important charitable trust. By competition the evils of favouritism and partiality may be avoided, but no plan of this kind can be a satisfactory substitute for a careful judgment in regard to the circumstances of each candidate.

\* MR. C. J. C. PRICE.

I may say at once that I see no practicable method of testing the work of teacher or of pupil, without at least some modification of the present examination system. The success of any plan must largely depend upon the judgment and honesty of purpose of those who administer it; and if examiners, subject to proper instructions, were always to exercise these qualities, the examination test would give satisfactory results. Can more be said of any other system?

The lines of study insisted on for some of our Honour Schools may be too rigid or too narrow; but a system which should encourage the opposite defect would hardly improve matters. For young men at the Universities, I should say that honest, thorough work, and the mental and moral discipline which it involves, is of primary, and the motive force,—whether ambition or necessity, or something higher than either,—only of secondary importance; nor can I avoid the conclusion that it is the fault of Examiners—or of the fetters by which they are controlled—if superficiality goes forth to the world with the stamp of solid learning. It is, perhaps, unfortunate that I am obliged to say that the training for honours of the mathematical student at Oxford is in my opinion less open to the charge of cramming than that of almost any other school; chiefly, no doubt, because unintelligent work in this subject does not pay from the mark-making point of view, and because ignorance of principles,

being incapable of being concealed or adorned by literary skill, is more easily detected by the examiner; who, by the way, in the mathematical school, is less frequently dazzled by style in composition than mystified by the utter absence of it! Moreover, the tendency here has been to make a class (as well as success in college or university scholarship examinations) depend less and less upon an acquaintance with those branches of the subject which lend themselves most readily to the crammer's art. But referring still chiefly to the field of my own experience, I am bound to say that in the *elementary* branches of mathematics (more especially in elementary Algebra) the training of the majority of those who do not aim at honours or scholarships, appears to be extremely defective; whilst the examination test which the school or university applies in these cases,—and which ought to react beneficially on the quality of the teaching throughout the country—leaves much to be desired. This failure arises to a large extent from a fear of the outcry which would be raised in the University and country by the maintenance of a genuine standard. In deference to this feeling, real test questions are too often excluded in favour of those which can be answered mechanically, and, in consequence, certificates are awarded to candidates who have no sufficient or even useful knowledge of the elements of their subject, so that, for example, a boy will pass in the elements of Algebra, who, although he can prove a formula, or go through the G.C.M. process, could apply neither correctly to a particular case.

In the same way, youths at a public school are promoted from form to form and sent to matriculate at the University, who have “got up” the Binomial Theorem and the Progression formulæ, who yet seldom form a G.C.M. or L.C.M., or even define their meaning, accurately. I have been told that this is due to the fact that parents “like to hear of progress” (!) and I know from long experience that, as a consequence, it often takes two or three terms to persuade such pupils that, even for the purpose of a pass examination, they must consent to begin afresh at the end of the first four rules;—so that the time spent upon Algebra at school has been more than wasted. In my opinion what is most needed—besides, of course, leaving greater freedom in the choice of subjects to honour students—is thorough teaching, genuine tests, and the abolition of shams. The desire may be somewhat Utopian, and in giving expression to it, I am conscious that it might proceed from a more worthy individual than myself.

## MR. ERNEST MYERS.

I have felt much inclined to sign the short paper, but fear I cannot. I only feel justified in taking public action in matters (of which there are several) on which both my convictions and feelings are stronger than they are on this. I have always protested, by word and act, against servility to examinations, but if recognised as the rough and subordinate instrument, which they are, I think they are useful, and that it is hard to find a substitute. In the higher education their evils will be controlled, if right ideas are general among the teachers, and without this a change of system would avail little. As to elementary education I am disposed to believe that the evils are far more serious, but here I cannot speak with knowledge. Here also I imagine that the evils arise rather from bad examinations in the abstract. I heartily hope you may procure an enquiry into this.

*From Second Letter.*

It seems to me that the evils of examination may be in great measure counteracted by (1) more care and thought on the part of examiners in setting questions which would test more than mere "cram." (2) Periods of probation (such as are suggested in the Protest). (3) Just ideas on education in teachers, such as I am disposed to believe to be on the increase; and these are mostly independent of systems, or are capable of modifying them. As to the evils of uniformity, have not these been to a great extent recognised, and greater variety in education introduced? Scholarships and Fellowships seem to me of real use, and, now that the latter have been reduced and limited, not excessive. As to health, I should fancy this applies chiefly, and with most force, to girls, though even here there are compensations in the counteraction of *ennui*, etc. The English boy may generally be trusted not to work his brain too hard (though of course there are exceptions).

## AN ASSISTANT MASTER IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL.

Besides taking the top class of this school in mathematics, I take one of the lowest classes. Our boys are largely recruited from the monied merchants of great commercial centres. They do not (these younger boys), unless exceptionally, know what a "liberal education" means, nor, if they understood, would they care for it. As a class, they only care to learn "what pays" at school, or in

after life. Apart from *punishment*, the only stimulus which is effective is the low one of emulation, prizes, place in class, and the excitement of examinations. Except in individual cases, the love of learning and knowledge (I am speaking of *school-knowledge*) is non-existent, the delight in turning out an exact and accurate result is unknown, pursuit of intellectual truth is not understood. Nor are they goaded on by the spur of poverty. Such boys often turn out excellent citizens and very good fellows. But the training of the minds of such boys is a problem, which I can only solve by pitting them against one another, or, in other words, by emulation.

I would gladly do what little I can to modify and ameliorate our present system, even if I cannot see how to transform it.

\* MR. H. DYER.

As one of the Governors of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College, and Convener of the Calender Committee, I have taken an active part in the re-organisation of the College, which is made up of previously existing institutions. Of course we had to make the best of things as we found them, but in all our arrangements we have been very much fettered by the examination system which prevails. The evening classes, which are attended by about 2,000 students, are taught in connection with the Science and Art Department, but in granting our College certificates, unless the students have done the work of the classes to the satisfaction of the teachers, the mere passing of the Science and Art Department Examination counts for nothing, the object being to discourage teaching which is chiefly directed to the passing of examinations. With the same object we try to make the teachers independent to a large extent of the results of individual examinations. I trust that the Science and Art Department system will soon be so modified as to allow this to be done to a still greater extent, as in my opinion nine-tenths of the money at present spent by that Department is absolutely wasted in so far as educational results are concerned.

Our day classes are independent of all such external examinations, and we propose to appoint examiners who, in conjunction with the teachers, will try to find out what the students really know of a subject. The final examinations for the diploma will consist largely of laboratory and drawing office-work, combined

with oral questions, for which it will be impossible to cram. In the Imperial College of Engineering, Japan, this system was carried out with marked success, and in my opinion it should be much more widely applied than it is in all scientific examinations.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL, M.P.

I quite agree as to the evil, but I am not sure that the evil certainly preponderates over the good, if only the education were the best. Nor am I sure that we could trust local masters without payment by results. I think the crying evils are two : first, that an enormous proportion of the education on which the energies of the teachers and the taught are expended is radically unpractical and useless ; and second, that in England we have (for the higher education) far too many and too large money prizes,—that the endowments are for the most a misfortune which stereotype a bad system. I doubt, then, whether I can sign the Protest against over-cramming and competition. I fear too many abuses would come in, if schoolmasters were too free of tests.

\* ADMIRAL SIR G. ELLIOT, R.N., K.C.B.

My experience of the present system of competitive examinations and cramming, is that it is mischievous and unjust. Mischievous, because the curriculum is unsuited to produce either the brightest intellects or the best material, and unjust because so much depends on chances, want of money, accidents, temporary illness, or natural incapacity for *plodding*.

Some families have an hereditary failing for spelling, and many a promising youth is turned back for that incapacity, or some other talent equally useless in his career of life. A lad may possess the germs of the highest military genius, and yet not be a book-worm. Practical abilities are made secondary to all the *ologies*, and many a fertile brain and physical vigour become stunted in growth by being over-strained in the race for literary supremacy.

However, it seems that the object sought for has been obtained, namely, to favour the aristocracy of wealth at the cost of the privilege of professional claims on the naval and military services. Why not require competitive examinations for employment in all

other professions as well as for the public service? A *non-business* man would then have some chance of placing his sons in the world's mart. Now he has none, and he has lost the openings the public services previously afforded.

I expect my views will appear strange to you.

#### THE PROVOST OF QUEEN'S, OXFORD.

I am afraid I must not sign the paper. I am conscious of the necessary drawbacks to examinations, as to everything human, but I cannot see what is to take their place. "Selection on public grounds by Heads of Departments" only means, as has been proved over and over again, jobbery, nepotism and favouritism. The endowment of research, at Oxford at all events, has proved a fiasco. The creation of chairs is the greatest waste of money in the world. There are "persons" who deserve all the endowment that can be provided for them, but if you *must* have a professor of this and that everywhere, a good many of them will not be worth endowing, and the money in many cases will be quite thrown away. What the professors want is the Scotch system, making the degrees, &c., depend on attendance at lectures. Happily we gave that up in Oxford 30 years ago. No *system* will make people disinterested students. Those who have the godlike desire of knowledge are independent of any system, however bad, and cannot be helped by any *system*, however good; but they are, always have been, and always will be a very small proportion of mankind, and the rest can only be induced to exert themselves by the hope of reward or the fear of punishment. Till we can put the idle in gaol we must reward the industrious, and though it is difficult to test proficiency, ability, and the qualities that render a man useful to the State, we must face the difficulty. It is preposterous to say that the specialists prefer the strengthening of the rational faculties to that of the rote faculties. They don't in the least care about general education. They dislike their pupils being withdrawn from the study of their last fad to the things which have braced and will brace the intellectual energies of the race. When you have devised a substitute for the present system which will stand use, I will help you to put down the present system. Till then, I must try to improve it.



## DIOCESAN EXAMINATIONS, BY A. B.

I.—*Arguments against*.—The very fact of having to be examined leads to a bad system of instruction in Religious subjects. By that I mean that teachers, however much they may strive against it, fall into the habit of cramming the children's heads with *facts* instead of impressing upon their minds the vast importance of Religious truths. It is not because any teacher would wilfully teach in that way, but for the simple reason that they generally find they have to work up to a very stiff syllabus, and hence it is almost impossible to do more than merely "cram" the historical facts, and the true teaching of Religious subjects taught religiously is sacrificed, because first of all the work demanded is too great, and secondly because the time is too limited.

Frequently, too, the Diocesan comes close upon the Government Examination, and thus produces worry both to teachers and scholars, for it is a very great strain (as things are now-a-days) to prepare for two examinations within a month or so of one another. The probable results of such an arrangement would be—overpressure on weak or delicate children, and if anything had to be neglected it would be the Diocesan requirements, because there would be no grant dependent on the results, whereas the very existence of the school depends on its earning a fairly good grant annually.

II.—*Substitutes for Examinations*.

(1). Daily visits of clergy to the schools.

(2). The clergy taking classes daily in Religious subjects.

In schools where the clergy daily visit and teach, there is no necessity for Diocesan Examinations, for it would be almost impossible under such conditions for Religious Instruction to be in any way neglected, and such supervision is calculated to do far more good than the annual visit of an Inspector, for it imparts a high tone to the school, and is a kind of moral prop, that could by no possibility be extracted either out of the preparation of a stiff syllabus or the worry attendant upon examinations.

## CLERICUS, M.A.

The Clergy claim the right of giving religious instruction to their children. Many fail to do this, and delegate to the "teachers." The "teachers" are so occupied in getting up the subjects for the annual examination of H.M.'s Inspector that, without pressure, they

neglect the religious instruction. The Bishop seeing this, and unable to secure the requisite results in any other way, appoints a Diocesan Inspector, who issues an annual syllabus, examines once a year, and publishes an annual report, classifying schools according to merit in religious knowledge within his syllabus. For this examination the children are crammed as they are for H.M.'s Inspector, and regard the Bible and religious knowledge as much to be analysed and tabulated, as other books and knowledge. For some weeks before the Diocesan examination, as before the examination of H.M.'s Inspector, the cramming is very strongly emphasized. The subjects in question are rammed into the children's heads *usque ad nauseam*, and the religious teaching and training are not only made subservient to "sacred history" and dogmatic theology, but are in direct antagonism to them. It may, I fear, in many instances be said that the religious training of the children's affections (the seat of religion) is in an inverse ratio with their theological knowledge.

#### B.A., CANTAB.

In a large and important town where I was Curate, I can't remember a single instance in which the clergy gave religious instruction daily in their schools. My Rector was in the habit of visiting his schools every day in the week, but he did not attempt to teach, because he knew full well that the high standard of marks expected by the Diocesan Inspector could only be obtained through a trained certificated teacher. Moreover, the master of this particular school, though a thorough Churchman and always glad to see any of the clergy in his school, would often remark that he would not have either Rector or Curate to teach his children, seeing that they were inexperienced in teaching, and that his character as a master depended to a certain extent upon the result of the Diocesan examination.

#### A MANAGER OF A SUNDAY SCHOOL.

The teacher is required to confine his efforts to a syllabus prescribed by the Diocesan Inspector, and as his reputation depends upon the "Reports" made to the managers of the school, he naturally works to secure good marks from the Inspector. As narratives, historical and genealogical subjects, with names and dates, or exercises which tax the memory of the child, are matters

which readily offer themselves to the assessment of the Inspector, the teacher's energy is expended in cramming the scholar's mind with these and kindred matters to such an extent that but little time remains in which to inculcate higher lessons, even if the teacher desires to do so. Hence the Bible is used as an ordinary class-book, and when the child leaves school he virtually puts it with his arithmetic and geography books on the shelf, and never troubles to look at it again. He thinks because he knows the salient points in some of the principal characters mentioned, he is well up in Biblical knowledge, and needs no further instruction. The consequence is, his moral faculties have not been cultivated or developed, and he enters the next stage of life unprepared for, and not provided with the means to resist, the promptings of the lower natures he sees around him, and finally succumbs to their insidious advances.

\* MISS E. BOYER BROWN.

I am a teacher myself, and love teaching, and only by standing apart from the senseless rush after "success in examinations" have I been able to gratify my taste. Gladly I bear my testimony to the fact that young people have a healthy appetite for knowledge, and can and do enjoy their studies.

\* MR. J. BROWN.

I do hope this matter will not be allowed to rest till the whole wretched system is thoroughly reformed.

We are oppressed here with the "Intermediate" system, and the more thoughtful hardly know what to do with their children. Prizes, honours, result fees, competition—no real education of the faculties, only a hasty pudding of indigestible facts. It is often of no consequence *how much* even of these any one knows, provided some others know less.

\* DR. G. BEACH, M.A.

As an Educationalist, debased at present to a successful percentage-monger, allow me to thank the *Nineteenth Century* for the extremely valuable service it has rendered.

In Elementary Schools,—I speak from 25 years' experience,—the mechanical method of examination, which of necessity brings into its train an unnatural system of standards, and a cramming and forcing method of instruction, has almost utterly strangled true

education. There is no room left for enlargement of mind, for culture of taste, for developing a sober imagination (I value imagination in this age of machinery); all, all, must stand aside to allow of the acquirement of *more facts*. The mental fire is smothered under the fuel of facts.

Above all, it is impossible to examine in moral and religious subjects.

\* PROFESSOR LIONEL BEALE, M.B.

You are, in my opinion, quite right about this examination mania, though I do not think there is much fear of children suffering from over-pressure, save in a few very exceptional cases. It seems to me that upon the whole the Services and the public will be the gainers by the examination system—but we are without doubt carrying the thing too far. Neither can it be wise to make the competition for place at a period of life when the faculties are not half formed. Nor is it fair to determine the future of an individual by the very imperfect test of the quantity of knowledge absorbable in a given time, seeing that many an examination success forgets half that he learnt a year or two after the competition. Some of those who are second or third rate at examinations at twenty will beat the first rates hollow at forty, fifty, sixty, and seventy. But still if the thing were not pushed to such extremes, that is, if all pass examinations were pretty easy, I cannot help thinking that we should have far better men to select from than in former days when there were no examinations worthy of the name. There are now too many subjects, and there is too much mere cram in each subject. There is no time for thinking, as the student must use all his powers in taking in points which are supposed to pay in the examination.

\* MR. THOMAS FARRINGTON, M.A.

My experiences as student, tutor, lecturer, and I may even add examiner, cause me to give my hearty adhesion to the sentiments expressed about the present competitive Examination Plague.

\* REV. CHAS. VOYSEY, B.A.

As one who spent 10 years in Teaching (not in Cramming), I beg to state that I consider my four sons' experience at a Public School amply justifies me in denouncing the system as a mockery of the word Education.

\* MR. LAVINGTON FLETCHER.

I have long since regretted the present system of education so-called, and think that the term of "book-cram" would be much more appropriate.

\* MRS. GOSTLING.

I consider it is the duty of every parent to revolt against the system. A child's life under our present system is a perfect torture. Besides, a great deal of what is taught is perfectly useless, as no heed is taken of the intellectual bent of the child.

\* SIR C. OAKELEY, BART.

The Protest might, I think, have been even more strongly worded, especially as regards the very great evil that has arisen from the system of sending young men to be finished at the so-called "crammers." There is frequently no sort of discipline or moral restraint at these establishments just at the time of a boy's life when it is most needed, and he falls into bad habits and into a low tone, from which he may never subsequently recover. All this is brought about by the necessity of "cramming" him with the mass of subjects required to pass the competitive examinations.

\* ADMIRAL SIR JOHN D. HAY, BART.

A system which has no parallel except in China, and which has always led that country into disaster, except when they have brought into their service men such as Charles Gordon, without any examination whatever.

\* MR. ARTHUR PEASE.

I do not fully agree with the opinions expressed about scholarships. We give free scholarships in our Grammar School to a few boys from the Elementary Schools of special promise. It is a good thing to give an advanced education to boys of this character, and without scholarships they could not obtain it from want of means.

\* J. S. TURNER, M.R.C.S.

I am decidedly of opinion that the present system of competitive examinations has failed to produce the best results. Not the candidates who are coached up for a particular examination, but they, whose training and general all-round qualifications give most promise

of future development, should be selected by Heads of Departments or by those who have acquired a practical knowledge of any particular work, and thereby a power to select the most suitable to fill positions in the various services. It is no doubt necessary that some *qualifying* examination should be passed, but beyond this, appointments should be made in the manner stated. Competitive examination shows the relative faculties of learning what is taught by others, whereby the mind becomes merely a storehouse of certain facts; but it does not show the relative capacities of employing the knowledge so acquired from others.

\* CLEMENT DUKES, M.D.

As a physician who has been intimately connected with schools for eighteen years, and one who is deeply interested in the welfare of boys and girls, may I be permitted to sign the Protest against "the Sacrifice of Education to Examination," with all its deleterious results to mental and physical well-being.

\* R. TAYLOR MANSON, M.D.

I see so many cases among children of devitalizing from mental overstrain and brain worry that I am glad to have the opportunity of putting my name to the Protest against our present educational system. . . . The physical torture inflicted on "slow" children in order to urge them up to examination point seems to me very inhuman, but I suppose does not come within the scope of the Protest.

\* MR. W. MOORSOM.

During some years I was taking pupils for Woolwich, Sandhurst, and Cambridge, and with them I had some who were preparing for the engineering profession. Thus I had forcibly brought before me the very different treatment required by those who had to enter the world, from the treatment necessary to get the others through the examinations. . . .

Having trained together pupils for engineering examinations, and pupils for an engineer's workshop, I have been compelled to adopt very different treatment for the two classes of lads; the one bookish, logical, deductive, largely a training in words; the other a training of the observing faculties first, then an application of the mind to comprehend what has been seen, and to trace back to their antecedents the phenomena observed.

Of course neither of these two methods will suffice by itself. Each has to be supplemented by the other in after life, but to my thinking the system that begins with books and logic is less likely to be corrected in after life than is the system that begins with observation of facts.

Now the examination system, *as at present carried out*, is directed solely to test knowledge of books, a power of reasoning deductively, and memory of words. It begins at the wrong end.

\* PROFESSOR C. H. HERFORD.

The Protest expresses views with which I am in the warmest sympathy, although I am here bound practically to a system which in the main ignores them. I am for my own part particularly concerned with an aspect of the examination system which is only incidentally discussed in the Protest,—its fatal influence upon original research. In Germany, where the student must before all things show that he can work and think for himself, originality has its full value ; the professor appreciates it in the student, the student in the professor. With us, on the contrary, where it is useless, if not dangerous, either to know more or to think otherwise than the examiner, originality is discouraged in the student by the professor (if he is wise in his generation), in the professor by the student. You will, I trust, excuse my perhaps needless insistence on a sufficiently obvious fact,—one which causes me fresh humiliation every time I return from Germany.

*Second Letter.*

As regards the point of the German professor's "hold upon his pupils" being greater than with us, I am not quite sure. The more critical and individualising temper which there characterises University teaching, renders the students critical and individual also, while the number of Universities and the facility of migrating at any moment from one to another, promotes comparison of the teaching of each, permits every preference, just or unjust, to find its practical expression, and is decidedly unfavourable to abject discipleship. No doubt, personal feelings have their part in German science ; there are bitter cliques, and it would be unfair to say there is no fervent loyalty.

## H. (HAMPSTEAD).

I have had four children to educate, and during the fifteen years or more of their school course (taking one with the other) the pressure imposed on them has been a constant and serious cause of anxiety.

The health of one of my sons was seriously injured by the severe school-pressure, and his happiness as well as ours at home was greatly impaired by the nervous and irritable state which the overstrain caused.

I had at last to take him from school, and to put him to his profession a year earlier than I should otherwise have done, because I knew that his professional work, though hard, would be much less severe than his work as a school-boy! In spite of hard and successful work he has gradually regained his health; but I fully believe that had he stayed longer at his school, his health would have been irreparably impaired. His Master—one of the leading School Masters in England—admitted to me, when I remonstrated with him against the overstrain of the School, that the present system knocked out of time a certain number of boys, but told me that that was inseparable from the system, and that no school could make a name in any other way.

A school-fellow of my boy's, a bright, clever lad, entirely broke down at the same school, and it is only now, after the lapse of six years, that he is able to set properly to work again. About four years ago, a very promising boy, the son of a friend, at another school broke down in the same way, and has never been able to get to work again. These three cases are very far from the only ones within my own personal knowledge. I am satisfied that at the present time it is a matter of great solicitude to parents in the middle class at all events how to protect their boys and girls (and girls even more than boys) from injury to health during their school course.

## \* MR. A. ALLINSON.

As a practical teacher of ten years' standing, I have now for several years been convinced of the infinite harm done to education by the false ideal of examination success. I have prepared many hundreds of boys for all sorts of examinations; and have had occasion again and again to be sickened by the cry—when recommending some subject or book for its own sake—"Will it pay?"



## \* MISS MARY McBEAN.

Everything is now sacrificed to the whim of the examiner, who *may* be a clever man, but who evidently writes his questions with the one aim of showing his own amount of learning. But the worst feature of the case is that all interest is taken out of the studies. A teacher must not now awaken an enthusiasm that will send a student to ransack a library on the loved subject,—because it is not prescribed by the examiner! We are becoming year by year narrower and shallower, more shut into one rut, more confined to a few subjects. Then again, do the examiners care what books girl-students read? Surely not,—or some of the foreign literature would not be required from young girls!

## \* MR. A. WHEELER.

I entirely agree as to the absolute necessity for freedom in each individual school. There is none now, only a stereotyped system of drill, preparatory to a performance on a set day. Enthusiasm is killed, and managers and teachers have come to look upon each child, not as a being to be educated, but as a grant-earning machine. The poor and neglected, who would be welcomed most warmly by one imbued with the spirit of his profession, are looked upon with horror, because they are not efficient grant-earners. But some of us hope to see a reasonable measure of liberty under some system of decentralisation, by which groups of people will manage very largely their own affairs, either under County or District Boards, chosen by the people themselves. It seems to me we might have local bodies, who, through a competent man, might say to each school, “shew us your aim and how you mean to reach it, and if it is a worthy one, we will give you sufficient aid.”

There is another point of view, about which publicly I say nothing because it is so liable to be misunderstood, and that is the *hatred* of the teachers for the present system. It is felt so strongly that to conduct the school with a sole view to its educational efficiency, is so certain to bring in its train professional ruin and financial collapse, that teachers, who know they are on a wrong track, are absolutely prevented, by fear of being branded as incompetent, from adopting better methods.

## \* MR. H. S. FOXWELL.

My own feeling is that the chief evils of the examination system, as at present practised, are the debasing commercial spirit it infuses into the acquisition of knowledge, and the monotonous lowering drudgery it inflicts on the abler teachers, whose freshness and power of extending knowledge are greatly enfeebled by it.

Though these defects are not necessarily essential to the principle of selection by examination, they are at any rate largely affected in degree by the particular system adopted. No doubt it is very agreeable to the spirit of the age to put a money value on every kind of excellence, and a system which pretends to offer a means of doing this will be very popular and difficult to supersede. It is not necessary, however, to aggravate its mischievous effects by such a grotesque development of commercialism as the method of payment by results. The evil done by examinations to the teachers, or rather to those who should be teaching, but whose energies are largely absorbed in examining, might be much diminished if the present excessive number of examinations were reduced, if their minuteness and detail were lessened, and if a wider range of tests were permitted, and less exclusive weight attached to the power of covering paper within narrow limits of time. As regards Pass Examinations, Mr. Edgeworth has shown in an elaborate paper in the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* for this month (October, 1888) that equally satisfactory results might be obtained at the cost of about half the labour now expended in looking over papers. And as regards Honour Examinations my own experience has shown me that they may have the most widely diverse effects, both on teacher and taught, according to the principles upon which they are arranged. Where a minute specification of topics, and still worse, of books, is adopted, they are mischievous to both. They fetter the teacher in arranging his course of education; and they lead the taught to aim at cramming and to be impatient of any instruction not obviously resolvable into tips. Where the schedules are liberal, and the object of the examination is to test the student's grasp of the subject, and his ability in handling his knowledge of it, the mischiefs of the system fall to a minimum, as small, I think, as would be the case in regard to any conceivable substitute for it. What I desire to see then is less of the blind worship of examinations and more common sense in their arrangement, both as regards their quantity and their quality. It is because I think public opinion

may do much to bring about this reform that I have signed the Protest.

\* SUB-LIEUT. C. E. BAXTER, R.N.

I should much like to add my name to the list of signatures to the "Protest against the mischief to which the system of competitive examinations is running in this country." I passed into the Royal Navy under this system, and my education throughout consisted of a continual working up for examinations, upon which depended the place I took among my brother officers, with the result that I was always being taught things instead of being taught how to learn, and in after life have found it necessary to start again at the beginning with any subject I have wished to obtain a knowledge of. It is a fact patent to naval officers that the competitive system does not admit to the service those youngsters most likely to develop into good officers.

\* MR. G. MACHAN.

I foresaw when the Education Bill was passed, what evils were likely to ensue, but only got laughed at when I dared to mention them. I have lived to see them come true, for there is no doubt the healthy physical man is going down before the mental. I pass groups of Board School pupil teachers going to their fortnightly examination, and it is painful to see the large number (more especially amongst the girls) who are wearing spectacles. The Board School authorities here are trying to induce parents to send their children to school at the age of four and four-and-a-half years instead of five, a most monstrous thing in this cramming age; surely they might let their bodies develope a little.

\* MR. O. C. WATERFIELD.

Many years ago I addressed to the Duke of Somerset, who was then First Lord of the Admiralty, a memorandum on the examination for naval cadets. The advice which I then ventured to proffer was (1) that the examination for admission to the Britannia should on no account be limited to special subjects, announced beforehand, but that questions should be set from the ordinary subjects taught in the public schools to boys of the candidate's age. (2) That the questions should be easy; and the examiners instructed to try and

ascertain what a boy did know,—not what he did not know. (I hold it to be an axiom of examination that ability is better tested by an original answer to an easy question, than by a correct reply to a question which is beyond the intelligence of the candidate). (3) That admission to the Britannia by competitive examination should not constitute a claim to a commission in H.M.'s Service ; but that from the whole number admitted those who appeared to be best qualified for future officers should be selected by those who had daily experience of their work, character, and physical fitness. (4) That the remainder should be returned to their families and ordinary school life with the least possible waste of valuable time. These principles perhaps admit of wider application.

\* MR. W. PENN.

I am only a private school master of about 30 years experience since my pupil teacher days. It has fallen to my lot to have a pretty wide and varied experience of boys and young men. For ten years I had educational direction of nearly 100 girls yearly in a large school for the daughters of professional men. I have had long acquaintance of both the evils (they are legion) and the benefits (they are few) of examinations. I have groaned under their tyranny for years, and longed, as they that watch through a weary night for the first streaks of dawn, for some movement from the leaders of thought and education in this country, which should in the name of all noble efforts and work, protest against this bondage and inaugurate a truly liberal movement for the chained educator. I welcomed, therefore, with an enthusiasm I cannot here describe, the appearance of an article on "The Sacrifice of Education to Examination," and the numerous and influentially signed Protest. Its reading occasioned me one of the happiest days I have known for years, and raised within me hopes for my work, in which I take so much delight, which I have scarcely ventured to indulge hitherto. I ought, perhaps, to add that I consider my work to be the training of character even more than of the intellect, that morals have a greater bearing on life than knowledge.

*Second Letter.*

My views on education are pretty fully contained in the following brief quotation from some old number of the *British Quarterly*, that I came across eleven or twelve years ago. I printed them as

the pith of my "Prospectus" for some years, but they did not attract pupils—very few people understood them.

"It is much more difficult to observe correctly than most men imagine; to behold, says Humboldt, is not necessarily to observe, and the power of comparing and combining is only to be obtained by education. It is much to be regretted that habits of exact observation are not cultivated in our schools; to this deficiency may be traced much of the fallacious reasoning, the false philosophy, which prevails."

REV. H. DAMAN, M.A., ASSISTANT MASTER, ETON.

I am not willing—at least at the present moment—to sign the Protest, partly because I believe that by so doing I should appear to commit myself to the opinion that examinations should—in whole or in very great part—be abolished. I think the remedy for the present evils should be found:

(1.) By placing the conduct of examinations in the wisest and most experienced hands.

(2.) By limiting the subjects taught in Board Schools, or wherever the expense of education is partly defrayed by public money.

(3.) By restoring to the comparatively poor the endowments which were intended to aid their education (or research), but which have been (in the last generations) confiscated, and have now become prize money for the comparatively rich.

\* J. H. AVELING, M.D.

I have read with much interest the letter which I now return signed, and in doing so I may give you my experience relating to the effect of the present mode of education upon girls. For nearly forty years I have devoted myself to the treatment of the diseases of females, and it is quite a *frequent* occurrence for mothers to bring their daughters to me to know what is to be done. These girls present themselves to me ill-nourished, highly nervous, the functions in abeyance or imperfectly performed, with loss of appetite and sleep, and with perpetual headache. My advice is always fresh air, exercise, and no mental strain. If this is adopted, the patient gradually improves; if it is not, she develops into a highly nervous and morbidly emotional woman, giving birth, in case of marriage, to

a weak and deteriorated offspring. The spirit of emulation is stronger in girls than in boys, and this causes them to work beyond their strength. When the body is growing fast and the physical needs are great, the requirements of the body are neglected, and the mind receives by far the larger share of attention.

Education as at present practised does not educe or draw out and cultivate the talent each individual possesses. It endeavours to force everyone into the same groove. Minds are as various as the metals. A manufacturer would be thought mad who tried to make lead, copper, and iron perform the same office. Examinations do not test sufficiently the higher faculties of the mind. Memory, the lowest, is that most tested. Judgment and imagination, upon which an individual's success in life most depends, are treated as of minor importance. I am happy to assist in this important and useful movement.

\* MR. T. A. WALKER.

Whilst there are several expressions as to detail in the Protest to which I should hesitate to assent, I am fully in accord with its broad principle. It appears to me, however, that one side of the scholarship question has hardly been touched upon. Whilst most strongly opposed alike to the prize scholarship and the prize fellowship, and whilst fully agreeing that inestimable good would be wrought by the diverting of vast sums now expended in mere prizes to local teaching, I think that the scholarship may equally well fulfil another end, viz., the bringing of able and struggling youth into direct connection with the Universities. The advantages of mere local class teaching cannot, to my mind, be weighed in the same balance with those resulting from residence in one of our ancient Universities. Mere knowledge is not culture, nor is the imparting of knowledge education. No mere local teaching will so truly educate a man as will constant and familiar contact with varied minds, frequent intercourse with companions of every shade of opinion and every rank of society.

While, therefore, I cordially welcome the great University Extension movement, I hail with yet greater gladness the movement of which I have detected signs in various places in the direction of the establishment of local scholarships or exhibitions, by the assistance derived from which the abler children of the poorer classes may be enabled to obtain the education they desire, it may be at

some University College, it may be at the old University. Nor are such scholarships necessarily awarded as the result of mere competition. In my own college, Peterhouse, as I suppose in many others, we have what is known as the "Deserving Students Fund" out of which donations are made *privately* and at the discretion of the tutor, who has full knowledge at once of the capacities and the needs of his pupils. This scheme might well be extended. The aim of a scholarship ought to be to assist struggling talent, not to reward a successful "pot-hunter."

It is in this spirit that I deplore the present employment of minor scholarships, an employment whereby the struggling student is defrauded, whilst our whole educational system is contaminated at its source. So long as the winning of scholarships "direct from the school" is regarded as the certain test of the competency of a school master, so long will the cry of overpressure be raised in our schools, and so long will true education be impossible.

#### \* PROFESSOR BLACKIE.

*Schools.*—In the case of schools I am of opinion that competitive examination cannot easily be dispensed with; but care should be taken by the teacher, who should be principal examiner, that all questions and exercises be set in such variety and range as to bring out the diversity of talent that Nature has planted in the breast of the young persons. The scholars should also be encouraged to bring to light any special talent they may possess over and above the range of the competitive examinations, and due weight should be given to such exhibition by the examiner. In doubtful cases *viva voce* examination should always be added to written exercises in order to bring out the promptitude, distinctness and alertness of the examinee. A special value also should be attached to whatever evidence of general culture and intelligence, in addition to the technical accuracy of the exercise, the examiner might be able to eluce; as for example in languages the examinee, besides translating any passage accurately *ad operaturam*, might be called to make such general observations and reflections on the matter of the passage as might occur to him.

*Official Appointments.*—The qualities which make a young man capable of performing effectively the duties of any public station, are not in any wise identical with those which enable him to make a good appearance at a school examination. The school

can test a certain amount of talent in certain specified departments of measurable knowledge; the duties of life require character and attitude, manner, judgment, readiness, tact, and other personal strong points, which can easily be known and felt, but admit of no definite measurement. In all public appointments, therefore, while a certain average of professional knowledge should, as a matter of course, be presumed, special regard should be had to the possession of those personal qualities which contribute more to success in life and the effective performance of public duty than any amount of merely scholastic attainment, and in order to secure this, personal knowledge should in all cases be supplemented by the testimony of various persons of independent position, with whom the candidate for advancement may have come in contact. I have only to add, with the view of satisfying opposed parties and giving different methods fair play, that if one half of a given number of official appointments in any year were made under an exact system of competitive examination, and the other under a more open system of minimum qualifications with personal knowledge and testimonial evidence superadded, all parties might accept such a compromise, and the results would supply valuable materials for future consideration. It may be of importance also to state that when I was in Halle, some twenty or thirty years ago, I had some instructive intercourse with Max von Duncker, then keeper of the records in Berlin, who spoke to me very emphatically about the danger of making public appointments by competitive examination pure and simple, as tending to produce a mechanical monotony of forced drill, rather than to bring out real strength of character and brain.

\* MR. J. ADAM.

I strongly sympathise with your remarks on the danger men run of limiting their mental horizon by the University examinations, and I feel convinced that our system tends far too much to bring men to one dead level, instead of accentuating the variety of taste and natural aptitude which is equally essential to the advance of science and to the formation of character. But I do not think that the effect upon the teacher (at least in the Universities) is necessarily so degrading, as might appear from the manifesto. I believe that even under our present system it is quite possible to teach men so as to make them doubt and inquire, and not lazily believe. In particular



I am sure that certain sections of the second part of the Classical Tripos are taught in this way. Moreover, I believe it is neither expedient nor right to acquaint parents with all the methods and subjects (in every detail) employed in the education of their sons. The mental horizon of the parent is frequently narrower than that of the teacher. I hold it to be the teacher's duty to make the son wiser and better than his father, even at the risk of being called a "corrupter of the youth." As regards details, I ought to say that I am as far as possible from wishing to abolish scholarships. Here, in Emmanuel at least, they are for the most part not prizes but helps. Of prize fellowships I say nothing; they stand on an entirely different footing. I signed the document because I agree with a great deal of your negative criticism;—what my reservations were, I have now stated. I feel that a system cannot be altogether right which sends us far too many men thoroughly jaded and incapable of intellectual interest; and I shall be only too glad if your inquiries throw any light upon the subject.

SIR E. SIEVEKING, M.D., LL.D., F.S.A.

I am very much disposed to think with you that there is a general tendency at the present day to "sacrifice education to examination"; the same complaint is to be heard in Germany, from where I have just returned. I regard it as due to a prevalent, and, from my standpoint, erroneous view of education, which is no longer treated as a means of discipline and development of the intellectual and moral faculties, but as a process by which a young man may at once be enabled to earn his bread. A greater variety of subjects is taught, and the learner's brain is crammed by all sorts of specialists to the detriment of its growth and to the future exercise of its full and trained powers. Every physician is constantly being brought into contact with the baneful results of exhaustion arising from this system applied to both sexes. At the same time I cannot regard the present condition of educational matters in this country as an un-mixed evil. Those whose memory carries them as far back as mine, will remember that there were other and more serious flaws in "the education" of all classes formerly, and I have every confidence in the good sense of our educational authorities that the exaggeration of the present system of examinations will before long be toned down to more reasonable dimensions. The ordinary run of examinations ought, in my opinion, not to be competitive; they should only

test the candidate's fitness for the work of life to which he intends to devote himself and give proof that he is able to enter upon the battle of life and to employ his energies to his further development and usefulness.

\* MISS ALICE WOODS.

In answer to your letter, I am glad to say I have had to do with schools in which examinations do not form a prominent part of the school course, and I consider that it is not only possible but quite easy to train young boys and girls to work industriously, not for their own individual advantage, but for the sake of their form.

In the school of which I am Headmistress (the Chiswick High School for Boys and Girls) some of the plans adopted are as follows: (a) In class work each answer is noted on the black-board by the teacher as correct or incorrect, and the position of the whole form is decided at the end of the lesson by the number of correct answers obtained, the standard of course varying with the length, nature, and difficulty of the lesson, *e.g.*, a hundred correct answers might give a form "Class I. with distinction"; seventy-five, "Class I."; fifty, "Class II."; and so forth. In individual written work each child has remarks put at the end of his or her exercise, *e.g.*, Excellent, Very Good, Poor, &c. Three E's in succession mean a report to the Headmistress, when the fact that A or B has been a great help to his form is specially dwelt upon, and the form takes much pride in seeing how many E's can be obtained by its members. (b) At the end of term the results of both oral and written work, which have been registered during the term by the mistresses, are reckoned in accordance with a plan agreed upon by Headmistress and staff, and the class of the form is determined and read out. Special commendation is sometimes given to those who have markedly helped their form. No order of merit is given for the work of the individual during the term, and thus all the excitement is directed towards the success or failure of the form as a whole, and the result is that the children glory in the success of their form, and narrate with glee at home how many 1sts it has obtained.

2. In certain examinations the results of individual work are given. The names are arranged in classes in alphabetical order, a certain percentage of marks entitling to a 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th class. Seventy-five per cent. would give a 1st class, and so on.

When the lists are read out, special attention is drawn to the number of 1st classes. If the school were a large one, I should propose that the school class lists should be published once a year for the benefit of the parents. As it is, the children usually write down their "examination class," and "the class" of the form for the term in each subject, and take them home. On the whole the majority of parents appreciate the system, and it is always made as easy as possible for them to come and see the school at work. The local difficulties in connection with attendance have forced upon us a modified form of prize giving, which I cannot altogether defend, and only adopt from necessity. Each form gains at the end of the term a certificate for attendance according to the good or bad attendance of its individual members. Any child who is present regularly morning and afternoon throughout the term can gain an extra hundred attendance marks for his form. Any one absent without leave, except on account of illness, loses a hundred ditto. Once a year, at Christmas, the certificates obtained by each form during the year are compared, and each form is presented with a picture for its room, the form that has attended best having first choice.

With elder girls I do not consider it needful to note every answer in class, and they are expected to work without so much stimulus. I must confess that their work is not quite so energetic as that of girls who are struggling for prizes, but I think this is not the fault of the system. I believe it is due to the fact that the number of the scholars in the Upper School forms is too small to create the public opinion in favour of hard work that is found in other non-competitive schools. (2.) The girls now in the upper forms had not been trained on the non-competitive system from early childhood. (3.) As long as examinations and prizes are the order of the day for boys, girls' and little boys' schools that are worked without them must suffer to a certain extent.

The girls feel that their brothers have an educational excitement in which they are not allowed to share, and the home feeling that girls cannot be expected to work as well as their brothers without the stimulus of prizes and examinations is so strong that many of the cleverer are inclined to accept this position, and are apt to grow phlegmatic, and work with less vigour than those girls who are brought up on the competitive system. In spite of this I have no hesitation in expressing my conviction that the average and dull

girl works far better on non-competitive plans, because she is never deprived of hope, and if the work of the cleverer is not quite so vigorous, I believe the gain in brain rest during years of growth, and the absence of feverish excitement, will lead scholars to work with greater zest in future years, and to feel that education is continuous, and not brought to an abrupt close by a Higher Cambridge or Oxford Certificate.

I believe that if but one large public school for boys had the courage to give up the competitive system it would be one of the most far-reaching and progressive educational movements that has yet been made. To find a boys' public school on our side would give just the strength that is needed. The great drawback to the working of the non-competitive plan is the want of faith among the teachers in its success. There is a lurking fear that after all we shall not turn out pupils of the same standard of attainment as other schools.

In regard to outside examination of schools, I am not at present prepared to advocate their abolition, provided they are carefully confined to the actual work done in the school, and the examiner chosen by the head master or mistress with the approval of the Board of Governors. When we are sufficiently advanced to have in every school a thoroughly trustworthy head and staff, I think some careful system of reports by each teacher to the head master or mistress throughout the school career might be devised, and occasional examinations held by whomsoever the head chose, and when he chose, so that a school certificate might be granted on leaving to each scholar who had passed satisfactorily through the school course. I fear that at present there would be some danger of favouritism in internal examination, and still more danger of prejudice arising from the fact that it is very hard for those who have taught a subject not to expect far too much from their pupils. On the other hand there is a possibility of slipshod work both on the part of teacher and pupil, and on such workers the effect of an outside examination is bracing.

#### \* MISS MARY A. WOODS.

I ought to explain that my work as a teacher has been limited to girls' schools, and that, though I am satisfied that the usual incentives to study are attended with serious evil, I have so persistently

(on *a priori* grounds) abstained from using them that I cannot testify to the evil from personal experience of it. I shall, perhaps, be most usefully employed in showing what incentives may be conveniently—and, as I think, with advantage—substituted for the usual ones, feeling sure that these would, in many cases, be abandoned at once if it could be proved that there was an efficient alternative.

The incentives usually employed are three, often combined, but obviously separable: prizes, competition, and “prepared” examinations. It is clear that if we can dispense with the last of these we can dispense with the other two, not only because we have no temptation to goad on our pupils with artificial “stimuli,” but because we are free to use natural ones. Saved from the necessity of compressing a maximum of teaching into a minimum of time, we have leisure to make our lessons *interesting*, to touch on collateral questions, to consider the varying needs and capacities of individual minds, and to show by our enthusiasm that learning, like virtue, is its own reward. All this rests entirely with ourselves. Any teacher who complains that her pupils are too dull to be interested convicts herself of dulness by so doing. I would say then, if I may venture to advise:—

1. Decline (at any rate during the earlier stages of school life, while the tastes and habits are forming) to send in for public examinations.
2. Use the freedom so obtained to make your lessons as delightful, as far-reaching, and as inspiring as you possibly can. But there will always be girls who, while readily amused and interested, shrink from the drudgery of hard work. For their sakes I would add:—
3. Fix a standard that *must* be reached. Classify all written work; reject all that falls below a pass-standard; commend all that reaches a high one. And especially, take note of the collective achievements of each form, thus substituting co-operation for competition, and making it each girl's interest that her class-mates should do as well as herself. By those methods, we may, I think, secure not only the habits of industry and accuracy which the ordinary system claims to produce, but some others, as to which it makes no such claim (though they may undoubtedly exist in spite of it),—the habits of delight in study for its own sake, and of interest in the achievements of others.

MR. A. HEADLAM, B.A., FELLOW OF ALL SOULS', OXFORD.

I answer your letter with some hesitation, as my views are hardly likely to be of any great importance, and I must be understood to speak solely of those examinations of which I have some personal experience—those in Oxford. (1.) In the first place no substitute is suggested for examinations. It is incumbent on those who would overthrow a system which has worked a transformation, which we can hardly realise, in the industry of Universities, and the purity of our public service, and which in spite of admitted faults has a definite duty to perform, to offer an alternative scheme. We must not allow the defects of an existing system to blind us to the greater evils its absence would cause. (2.) It is suggested that boys should be taught to love knowledge for its own sake. This a certain number learn by being compelled to work for it. About one in a hundred would learn it in any case; but the remaining ninety-nine would be without even the rudiments of learning and cultivated taste, which they at present acquire. The fallacy is to suppose that the mass of mankind have any inborn love of the necessary drudgery which must be gone through before they are in a position to understand or aspire to knowledge. (3.) I notice that a great deal has been said lately by certain Oxford professors to the effect that the examination system deadens intellectual life in Oxford and destroys individuality. I venture to think that that could only be written by some one entirely outside the stream of University life. Many defects might, no doubt, be found in undergraduate life, and what I am now saying applies only to a portion of the whole number, but it must be noticed that it applies just to those who take examinations most seriously. Nothing is more striking than the large number of essay and other societies which exist; one is to be found in every College. Each of these helps to foster the intellectual life of the members, and the number and variety of subjects upon which, in any given week, essays are read and discussions raised in the University is some sign that intellectual interests are not narrow. Taking the last number of the *Oxford Magazine*, I find that at the essay society at Merton a paper was read on "Clough"; at New College, on "Russian Novels"; at St. Edmund's Hall, on "The Early British Church"; at St. John's, on "The Value of Souls." The most important point for us to notice is that in the vast majority of cases, the most vigorous members of these societies are also steady workers for the schools. With regard

to another complaint raised that there is a want of individuality among undergraduates, and especially amongst those who have gone through the University course,—this again implies that the writer lives very much outside the University. Personally I can speak from a knowledge of many classes of undergraduates having, until recently, been one myself, and also from having examined in the last few weeks some twenty of the ablest members of the University on a wide range of subjects. One or two showed signs of being somewhat overdone, and, if I may use the word, “stale”; the greater number could not be accused of want of individuality or of vigour. (4.) When, however, it comes to details, reforms are perhaps needed, and would not at any rate do much harm. Probably the best examinations are connected with the Honours Schools in Oxford, especially the school of *Literæ Humaniores*. Here the range of subjects is wide, the time of reading is so lengthy that cramming becomes very difficult, and in the examination not only knowledge but also style and method are required, while freshness and literary power carry great weight. When we come to the Pass Schools we find a considerable confusion, and a decidedly unnecessary multiplication of examinations, and this is the direction in which reform is necessary. Examinations do not do much harm; too constant examinations do. A great step would be gained if University and other examinations could be reduced in number and made simpler in character. The examinations in the Oxford school coming at the end of two years having been arranged to shew a man’s power, make unintelligent reading useless, and invigorate rather than injure a man’s mind. If I may be allowed to add another personal experience, I may perhaps say that an examination—though of course hard work—is quite capable of giving pleasure to those who have to go in for it, and of helping them to understand their work. I am afraid you will find my views very conservative. You are at liberty to use them as seems to you best.

\* MRS. ALLAN CHAPLIN.

Examination is supposed, is it not, to test at a certain age the result of the education that a youth has received, is supposed to discover the highest intelligence, and the most available brain-power for practical life? If so, surely the plan of “coaching” a youth tends to evade this object. It is true that people cannot in these days buy professional advancement, but is there not in our present

system something of the nature of purchase? The rich only can afford to pay the high terms asked by the successful "coach." Upon idle youths the effect of reliance on the "coach" is very bad; they feel they can be indolent with impunity; they talk sometimes as if it were someone else's affair that they should know enough in order to pass their examinations,—as if they were empty sacks into which so much knowledge could be forced by anyone who thoroughly understood the business! The false view taken of the object of education by parents, and therefore naturally by youths themselves, is assuredly one of the most serious results of the modern plan of competitive examination.

*A Lady sends the following Extract from "Fors Clavigera"*  
(John Ruskin).

Farther, of schools in all places, and for all ages, the healthy working will depend on the total exclusion of the stimulus of competition in any form or disguise. Every child should be measured by its own standard, trained to its own duty, and rewarded by its just praises. It is the *effort* that deserves praise, not the success; nor is it a question for any student whether he is cleverer than others or duller, but whether he has done the best he could with the gifts he has. The madness of the modern cram and examination system arises principally out of the struggle to get lucrative places; but partly also out of the radical blockheadism of supposing that all men are naturally equal, and can only make their way by elbowing; the facts being that every child is born with an accurately defined and absolutely limited capacity; that he is naturally (if able at all) able for some things, and unable for others; that no effort and no teaching can add one particle to the granted ounces of his available brains; that by competition he may paralyse or pervert his faculties, but cannot stretch them a line.

\* MISS SIM.

Examinations on the whole are equally detrimental to the adult as to the child. The certificates or diplomas given to teachers are now gained according to the number of marks obtained by the *candidates*. They should be given according to results shown by teaching power, power of discipline, and moral influence. These results can only be judged while the candidates are in training.



*From "HANDBOOK OF PSYCHOLOGY" (J. SULLY).*

*Sent by Mrs. Allan Chaplin.*

Being an anti-social feeling, rivalry requires the educator's careful watching, lest it grow into a feeling of hostility and lasting antipathy. This applies with special force to the school, where the teaching of numbers together offers a wide scope for this feeling. The mode of teaching by assigning prizes has the great drawback that it tends to develop the impulse of rivalry in excess. A boy who gets into the way of looking at a companion as a possibly successful claimant for the prize he covets, is hardly likely to entertain very kindly feelings towards him. As Miss Edgeworth reminds us, superior knowledge is dearly acquired at the price of a malevolent disposition. Rivalry is a feeling to be kept in the background. Children should be encouraged to excel rather for the sake of attainment itself than for that of taking down another. In other words the scholar's prevailing motive should be worthy ambition, or desire to get on, rather than the distinctly anti-social impulse of rivalry. As Rousseau and others have pointed out, the teacher can further this result by his mode of apportioning praise, grounding his estimate on a comparison between what the pupil has been and what he is, and not between what he is, and what somebody else is.

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Where as with the schools, rewards are given as prizes for successful competition with others in intellectual pursuits, the moral effect becomes very much circumscribed. As already pointed out, the impulse of rivalry tends to be anti-social, and the eager competition for prizes has a baneful rather than a beneficial effect on the moral character. Since the moral effect of rewards depends on its being recognised as the fruit of virtuous exertion, school rewards can only have such effect when they are conferred, not on the ground of absolute attainment, which is largely determined by natural superiority, but on that of individual progress. To give a prize to a clever boy is not, strictly speaking, an act of moral discipline at all. On the other hand to reward a boy for special exertion comes under that category, since it distinctly recognises the moral element in intellectual industry.

#### PROFESSOR FLOWER

I am in general sympathy with this movement regarding examination.

THE DUKE OF NORFOLK.

I will not ask you to add my signature to the letter you send me, but I may say that I certainly agree with the general drift and object of it.

PROFESSOR G. RAWLINSON.

I have no hesitation in saying that I have a keen sympathy with the movement.

REV. CANON F. PAGET, OXFORD.

I believe that the evils attendant on competitive examinations are often grave and manifold ; and that there is great need of enquiry and effort with a view to the prevention of the harm done.

\* G. FIELDING BLANDFORD, M.D.

There are two points which occur to me as deserving notice. The first is the absurd craze for the examination of girls. Girls are constantly brought to me professionally, who have broken down in nerves or general health through working for examinations, or disappointment at not passing them. So far as I can see, in many of these cases, there is not the slightest necessity for passing any examinations at all. The girls are not going to teach or earn their livelihood, and yet they are perpetually subjected to examination and the consequent cramming. Secondly, I protest against the multiplication of men's examinations. In my own profession, instead of passing one or two examinations they have to pass three or four. The consequence is, that they work at the immediate subject, and when the examination in that is passed, it is put aside as done with, and heeded no more. I believe that at the end of their time they are much less well-informed than they used to be. The various subjects are not made to bear one upon another, and the hospital practice and observation of disease is interfered with and shortened by these ever-recurring examinations.

A STUDENT.

The examination feels like a heavy cloud hanging over one completely for some months. All one's reading is affected by a desire to note points minute details and facts which might possibly be asked for, and yet which are unimportant. This feeling affects

one even after an examination is over, and one unconsciously reads with a feeling "How would that help me in an examination." If one continued many years under such pressure I can imagine this feeling becoming habitual and consequently destructive to any real intellectual life and development.

A hatred for all books and all reading might quite easily be caused, even in one naturally fond of studying, if my own feelings may be taken as an example.

As the dreaded time approaches, a feeling grows that to do anything else, to read anything unconnected with that particular examination is wrong and a waste of time; the natural spring of mind and reaction, that comes through work alternating with leisure and play, are lost in a continual dead level grind.

The one great advantage I see in examinations for more mature students is that from their pressure some people are induced to study a subject which interests them more thoroughly; but even here there is a possibility of the preparation for the examination producing a reaction of disgust and dislike. I felt this for a time even with such subjects as History and English Literature after working for the Cambridge Higher Local.

\* REV. H. D. RAWNSLEY.

I have talked the paper over with an old Balliol friend and tutor, and with Professor E. C., one of the ablest of the Scotch University teachers, and to-morrow or the next day will talk the matter over with Provost H. of E.

The conclusions arrived at are as follows. The general impression is that, as far as our Public Schools and Universities go, the *pot hunter* and prize winner is a *rara avis*. That the slight stimulus given by place in class, &c., is a gain to the average youth in the time before he becomes enamoured of learning for learning's sake.

That on the whole it is believed that men at the University read hard, not for the honours they may get, but on the same ground that they row hard, for their college or old school's sake, and because it is good form to work hard. That it is true that pot hunting, when it exists, destroys the intellectual soul and marrow of a man. There are instances of men in the English and Scotch Universities who have been thus destroyed.

At the same time some kind of money awards are a necessity by which men shall be able to obtain education, and so rise from higher to higher. The whole tone of those I speak with is in favour of qualifying rather than competitive examinations.

The Civil Service business and Sandhurst drill are abominations.

It is suggested that the Indian Civil and Home Civil Service should demand of all candidates that they should have passed their Public School and University curriculum, from which, it is averred, they will have gained the *tertium quid* of public spirit and self-respect, self-government, knowledge of men, at a time when men are most knowable, and *esprit de corps* to fit them to be a governing class.

It is held that the honour or class list system by which people are placed in classes, rather than individually according to merit, is good, and might be followed out in a National School system. It is hinted that no National School system is worth anything that does not examine or test capacity to teach of teacher, as well as capacity of taught. That the conduct and methods of a school should be more looked to than is at present the case. The pupil teacher system in our National Schools is spoken of as specially needing looking into. These teachers are at present untaught. As to examinations by teachers of their own pupils, it is thought that it would be impossible to trust the teachers unaided *ab extrâ* to do this satisfactorily. Prejudice and personal liking come too strongly into play, but it is held that no one is so qualified to examine the pupil as the teacher; and it is suggested that every examining body ought to have associated intimately with it the teacher of the pupils to be examined.

I may add that since these conversations I have spoken with the Head Master of C., and with the Master of T., and Master of P., and Warden of a well-known London Training College for Teachers in our elementary schools. I think, on the whole, they were in the main agreed, except that in the latter case it was shewn that we do not give sufficient time when we are training National School masters to allow their brains to assimilate the various subjects taught, and I found that the Master of P. urged that the competitive system and place in honour-class by marks were fairer to men who were running or had entered for a race than any lumping of men together into classes as a qualifying examination would do. I have also had occasion to talk with one of our ablest University Extension

lecturers; he agrees with the statement of the case as submitted by this consensus of opinion, and shews me that the admission of the teachers to the examining body is carried out by the University Extension system and works admirably. No prize can be gained by the students examined until the result of their papers is compared with the lecturer's actual personal knowledge of their work done previously to the examination. And he agreed with me that more might be done at stimulating intellectual effort in voluntary fields of thought and work after men leave the University, if the M.A. degree, which is now only a matter of payment, and therefore really a bit of humbug, could be utilised as a gift from the Universities, *honoris causâ*, like the honorary D.C.L., to the men who, by their efforts in literary fields, strive honestly to help their time. An artist, Mr. H. G., of repute, was with us and said if the Universities would thus recognise the *Artist's* craft, and confer the M.A., *honoris causâ*, upon painters and sculptors, they would really be doing something to help forward a kind of spirit of recognition of good work done which would help forward art work in England. I leave the thought with you. I know that Balliol College has given a kind of honorary Fellowship to a man for his good work done in the cause of artizan education, and so has recognised the idea.

### EDWARD A. FREEMAN, D.C.L.

#### THE LAST THING IN OXFORD EXAMINATIONS.

I do not know that I have anything specially to answer in the controversy on examinations, in the earliest stages of which I took a part. But one or two things have struck me as showing the rooted inaccuracy of some minds. I was constantly referred to as if I had spoken against examinations of all kinds and everywhere. Yet I had carefully limited all that I said to examinations in Oxford, because it was of there only that I had any right to speak. About Civil Service, Army, Public Schools, &c., I said nothing, because I know nothing. I conceive the system in them to be very mischievous; but I cannot say anything about them from my own experience.

One thing especially amused me. I had spoken of various subjects, Divinity, Law, Natural Science, some branches of History, some forms of Language, as unfit subjects for the B.A. Examination. Divinity and Law, I said, ought to go back to their own

faculties, and the other subjects should be taken in an examination or other exercise for the degree of M.A. By one of the disputants—I forget his name, but I believe he is a well-known crammer—this was understood to mean that I objected to all study of any of the subjects spoken of, my own special work among them. I treasured this up, as showing that the crammer could not understand that there could be such a thing as study without reference to an examination.

Here in Oxford, amidst a good deal of darkness, we have lately seen some signs of light. I do not profess to understand the system of examination at present in force here. It is so complicated and so constantly changing that I conceive that he who would give his mind to understand it can have no powers left for the understanding of anything else. It would seem, in its endless details, in its endless changes, to have grown up at the hands of men who had nothing to do but to patch up and to tinker examination statutes, and who thought that patching up and tinkering examination statutes had in itself a sort of *opus operatum* merit. They seem to think of statute-patching, as Queen Mary Stewart thought of the sacrament of marriage, that it cannot be too often repeated. It is amusing, but at last it grows wearisome, to see the gravest men with the gravest countenances pottering away at some peddling change in Group A 1, Preliminary that, Additional Subject the other, tithing their mint and rue and anise and cumin with the solemnity of a Chief Justice sentencing a man to be hanged or a Justice of the Peace explaining the nature of an oath, and forgetting the weightier matters of the law, never thinking that an University exists for the promotion of learning, and not simply for the purpose of putting Group A 1 into a new shape every term. The comic side of their employment seems never to come into their minds. They see nothing grotesque in “additional subjects,” which, it seems, are taken up before the subjects to which they are “additional.” They see nothing grotesque in a system of examination so complicated that it cannot find names for its branches, and has to talk about Group A 1 and the like. The thing seems to bring a premature old age on both the doers and their handiworks. I heard a man the other day talking, gravely and fondly, of “Old Group C.” “Group C” might have been as old as the Old Red Sandstone, but in truth this venerable group cannot be older than sixteen or seventeen years. The funniest

thing of all I saw is the title of a book, where a man described himself as "late Examiner in Substituted Matter." I could only guess that that was something which, like many other things, answered Lord Palmerston's definition of dirt, "Matter in the wrong place."

So time is wasted, energy is wasted, over these trifling follies, about which one thing only is wanted, a single Statute to get rid of them all. Meanwhile for learning mighty little is done; nothing will be done as long as the degree of M.A. is given at random to every man who can anyhow scrape into the degree of B.A. by any of the ten thousand crooked paths which nowadays lead to it. Yet there have been of late one or two things that may give us a small measure of hope. I was able the other day to vote for a Statute on the express ground that it made, for certain people at least, one examination the less, and that it brought two branches of knowledge into close connexion. Some advantage was to be given in the School of Natural Science to those who had taken honours in *Literis Humanioribus*. This must be a gain. I know, by my own experience in another school, what a gain it is to keep up the connexion between *Literæ Humaniores* and their fellows. The separate school of so-called "Modern History" was an absurdity from the beginning. I argued against it forty years ago, and experience has confirmed what I said then. But the absurdity was much less as long as a close connexion was kept up between the school of "Modern History" and the school of *Literæ Humaniores*. It was when the two were wholly parted asunder, when men were called to go in for "Modern History" without having gone in for *Literæ Humaniores*, that the school of Modern History at once went down, down, down. I examined one set of men in 1864 and a very inferior set in 1873. Again, it is understood that the Boards of Medicine and Natural Sciences have set their faces again a proposal to have a separate School of Medicine as one of the endless ways of getting the degree of B.A. At present, by a most grotesque turning about of things, by the utter confusion of the old system of faculties, two of the many paths to the degree in Arts are through examinations in Law and in Theology, which of course ought to come at a later stage, as exercises in their proper faculties. Some have thought of a school of Medicine alongside of those of Theology and Law, as yet another road to the B.A. Such a proposal is open to all the objections which apply to the schools of Law and Theology and to a good many more. It would be the

greatest of all sacrifices to the silly fashion of premature "specialization," the fashion of making the earlier University course a matter of a future profession instead of a matter of general preliminary training, useful for all professions and all states of life. It would carry yet further the strange devices by which some arrangements different from those which affect other men have been made for future members of particular callings, Army or Indian Civil Service, devices which have created a mysterious being called a "Master in Surgery," and which have threatened us with a Hunnish invasion of Greekless attorneys. But the Board of Medicine and the Board of Natural Science, with a wisdom that one would not have looked for from any "board," have seen that the institution of such a school would be bad for their own studies, as it assuredly would be bad, worse than its two fellows, for the general training of the place. We have therefore one or two bright spots in the general cloud. A distinct step forwards—forwards, as used, meaning backwards—has been taken, and what its admirers would doubtless call a forward step has been happily thwarted. Some day, we begin to hope, we may sweep away "Moderations" and Group A 1, Additional Subjects and Substituted Matter, and all the rest of the rubbish which has been piled up during the last forty years.

Please to remember that I am as eager as any man can be to draw to the University men of all classes and all future callings. I believe that an University training is, or was, good for all of them. Let us have the Civil Service men and the Army men, only let them come on our terms, not on theirs. Let us have the attorneys; only let them not be Greekless. Let us have the surgeons, only let them be satisfied with being Masters of Art or Doctors in Medicine, without inventing so grotesque a formula as "Master in Surgery." Let us have the bankers too, but let us not invent anything for them so funny as "Master in Banking," or perhaps the better-sounding "Bankery."

Please to remember also that I have never said a word against examinations altogether. I have simply said that, though examinations are an evil, they are a necessary evil, that therefore they should be few and searching, instead of many and superficial. The old examination in sixteen books was searching; it was a real test; it was admirable as the crown of preliminary studies, mischievous even then only when men thought, as they sometimes thought, that no study after it was needed. Let me once more set down what is



needed ; that is, what is needed here in Oxford,—of no other spot have I any right to speak.

First, let the “Head Masters,” the most uppish of mankind, to judge from the papers that they are always sending us, be taught their place. It is for them to adapt their schools to the rules of the University, not for the University to adapt its rules to the fancies of the “Head Masters.”

Secondly. The ordinary time of entrance at the University should be not later than eighteen, seventeen would be better still.

Thirdly. There should be a general University Matriculation Examination. This would get rid of the grotesque practice by which Responsions—once the exercise for the *status* of *Generalis Sophista*, which seems quite forgotten—is practised on unborn babes, and some “certificate” from somebody or other, not the University, taken instead—no, I think it is French, *in lieu*—of it.

Fourthly. The B.A. examination should be again in the good old “Classics and Mathematics,” best of all trainings for all studies that may come after.

Fifthly. The M.A. degree should be given only after a test of proficiency, in whatever shape may be thought good. It might be an examination ; it might take some other form. Here a man’s special and chosen work could come in, be it history, language, natural science, or anything else. Real proficiency in any branch should win the degree. Theology and law, as separate studies, should go back to their proper faculties. Neither for B.A. nor M.A. should there be any class lists, but the examinations or other exercises should be such as to make the B.A. degree respectable and the M.A. degree honourable.

All this of course implies the earlier time of entrance suggested in my second proposal. And this implies the carrying out of the first. The University must assert its independence, and not allow itself to be dictated to by “head masters.”

## MR. FREDERIC HARRISON.

### A FEW LAST WORDS.

Since the publication of the Protest against excessive examinations in November last, I have read a great body of papers more or less in opposition to the views there expressed. But what strikes me so much in these papers is this, that hardly one

of them is a plain, unqualified and reasoned justification of the examination system as it now exists. A very large part of these ostensible defences of the system are really condemnations of it. Almost all of the defenders give up much, see faults here, abuses there, and altogether defend a reformed and renovated system of examination, which does not exist at all, but which each hopes to see after his own ideal. Well! it is a reformed and renovated system of examination that we wish to see. So that the bulk of that which professes to be support of the existing system is really attack on it nearly as hearty as ours. From Professor Ray Lankester, the Balaam, the son of Peor, of the defence, to the less trenchant but qualified adherents of a possible examination system, there has hardly been a single voice raised amongst responsible and experienced instructors anywhere, to assure the public that the *actual* examination system is entirely satisfactory.

A large proportion of the defenders seem to consider that the essence of defence consists in vehement counter attacks and carrying the war into the enemy's country, smart sallies and ingenious retaliations on the foe. That is no doubt a sound rule in war. But this is not war. I have myself been made the object of many witty rejoinders, which I will endeavour to take with good humour. But does this advance matters much? The question which interests the public is whether the system by which education is tested is or is not the best that can be found. But whether I and my friends who raise that question have said foolish things, or have no right to meddle, or are open to a *tu quoque*, is not very interesting to the public. The one matter it cares for is whether or not the present examination system is all that it should be. For our inconsistencies, our ignorance, our blunders, the public does not care a straw.

Again, the universal answer to our Protest resolves itself always into one question—What will we substitute for the examination system? Well! that seems to our critics quite conclusive. But why are we bound to find a substitute? Is it clear that any substitute of the kind is needed at all? And may we not point out practices which seem to us hurtful to education without being bound to set up some other practice which might be even worse? If a physician tells an alderman that he is ruining his health by over-eating or over-drinking, is the man of science bound to supply him with a substitute which shall be equally

fascinating as excess? The remedy is to avoid over-eating and over-drinking. Eat and drink less, avoid all excess, live with moderation. So say we now. No substitute for eternal examination is necessary or expedient. Avoid all excessive and artificial examination. Teach and learn without reference to examination. And if you must examine, examine with moderation, and in a natural, spontaneous, and thoughtful way. Do not make it a trade; do not make it an end; do not trust in it so entirely. Give up the old dipsomania for tables of marks, and you will soon find any substitute quite needless. I am told we ought to answer the numerous criticisms on our Protest. But when we have put aside those criticisms which practically concede all that we assert, all those which are mere personal rejoinder and counter-attack, and all those which amount to nothing but What will you substitute? I hardly find anything that remains for us to answer.

To state my view shortly, I will here simply put down the positions which satisfy me in this matter.

1. In the first place, I think that examinations in schools, colleges, and Universities are far too numerous, too special, too technical. I do not pretend to say that examinations can be or should be dispensed with. But I think they are five times too numerous, too mechanical, too much subdivided. I incline to think that one main examination for each course of study ought to be sufficient, though special teachers may usefully hold subordinate repetitions in their own subject for their own use.

2. Secondly, I think that to make constant examinations the main instrument for exacting study is a thoroughly vicious system. You do not get real study, but only the semblance of it. You make the study itself odious and irksome. You are continually being eluded by the examination devices and all the resources of cramming. And you are placing the ground of study on a thoroughly unwholesome footing. Those who are responsible for the training of boys, youths, or men, whether as their actual teachers or the directors of their studies, ought to rely on moral, social, and intellectual motives to study, and not on the examination whip. They are trusting to a very false and evil instrument, whereas they ought to make study attractive in itself, and invest it with the dignity of a moral and social duty.

3. Then, I think the present system faulty in producing a special profession of examiners, at least in the shape of men much

occupied with examining. Examining ought to be a mere incident of teaching, and ought to be strictly confined to those who teach. As a means of teaching in the hands of those who teach, examining is not likely to be misused. What we complain of is that it is entirely detached from teaching, and is made the test of teaching and the absolute master of those who teach.

4. Again, I object to so much examining being in the hands of young and inexperienced men, themselves just fresh from the examination harrow. No doubt the young men are eager, full of "tips," and devoted believers in the miraculous powers of the great god, examination. But that is just what examiners have no business to be. Examining, that is *judging* knowledge, habits of mind, and mental discipline, is a very difficult and complex business. It ought to be the task of men at the close or at the summit of their career as teachers, and not at the start of it. Competent teachers, full of their subject, with trained experience of different minds, may profitably judge the different minds and stages of knowledge of many students. An inexperienced, eager, confident young prize-man, without any experience of teaching, can only draw up a mechanical mark-sheet on a cut and dried plan of his own, bristling with tips, tags, catches, and tricks of the art which he foolishly takes to be knowledge. In China, at least, the examiners are learned and aged Mandarins. With us, the examiner is, often as not, the raw, self-confident, narrowly taught, artificial classman of last year.

5. Again, examinations to be useful ought to be leisurely, simple, thorough, and with ample margin for reconsideration, rehearing, and reflection. Everyone knows that it is a helter-skelter; furiously over-crowded, over-hurried, and without a spare quarter of an hour anywhere. An examiner has to read and judge 4000 or 5000 pages of MSS., where he ought to have 400 or 500. He has 400 or 500 men to examine where 40 or 50 are too many. The examinee has a dozen or 15 papers to write, where 4 or 5 are enough. There are too many special papers, too many days of continuous examination, too many subjects, too many students for each examiner, too little time for reviewing, re-considering, and correcting first impressions.

I say nothing myself about appointments in the Services, for I confine myself to the injury to education in schools, colleges, Universities, and the like. My point in this controversy is the

damage done to *education* by the present system. How competent men are to be found for the various Services is a matter I leave to those who know more about the Services than I do. I object to our whole system of education being demoralised and perverted in order to try and prevent public officials from exercising jobbery. If jobbery is so rife and so serious, let us deal with it directly, as we have dealt with bribery. Let Mr. Balfour bring in a new Crimes Act, to make it six months' imprisonment with hard labour to job an office in H.M.'s Service—and I will support him. We have put down bribery by a stringent Act. They are trying to put down boycotting. Let us all try to put down jobbery.

Lastly, let me say that I have not made any sort of attack on particular persons, or even any class of persons. In talking of examiners and crammers I have not had particular persons in my mind. Mr. Walter Wren seems to think that no one can allude to the cramming system without alluding to the great establishment over which he presides. I have no such meaning. He says that he and his colleagues are occupied in teaching, and I do not for a moment deny it. There are "crammers," of course, in Schools, Colleges, and Universities, just as much as outside of them. Many teachers are no doubt really "crammers." And many so-called "crammers" are really most efficient teachers, as I have no doubt Mr. Wren, Mr. Scoones, and their colleagues are. It is not the man I complain of, but the system. I object to the art of "cramming," as the inevitable result of the art of examining. My fear is that under the examination mania, all education is fast becoming mere cramming.

#### AUBERON HERBERT.

I propose to sum up some of the evils—many of them referred to in these letters—which seem necessarily to inhere in examinations when divorced from teaching. Let it be once more repeated that the greater number of these evils only exist as a much milder type, where the teacher is the same person as the examiner; and that the grievance, in this country at least, is concerned with a system, under which the teacher must conform to an external standard fixed for him. I will then glance at some of the arguments in defence of external examinations; and then touch on what I believe to be the remedies.

1. *Subjection of teacher to an external standard.* Notice, as so often urged, his loss of self-direction and spontaneity. Dependent and unable to teach in his own way, his individuality—the source of all powerful influence—is lost in the system which envelopes him. Enthusiasm for his subject and love of knowledge have become dangerous influences to him, tempting him to mislead his pupils from the strait path before them. He is as a man set to walk between two high walls, with no power to turn to the right hand or to the left. Indeed, after many years of such walking, he may altogether lose desire to quit the strait and set path, and even doubt whether or no there is any world outside his walls, into which it is at all profitable to enter. Moreover, bad influences of a positive kind fall upon him; not only must he renounce his higher self and mortify his intellectual desires, but he is often tempted to descend to the operation of what Mr. Latham has called “sizing” the mind of the pupil. As weight, that is not derived from the cotton threads, and surface are added to the fabric, so is the appearance of an excellence given to the pupil, that is less really in himself than in the art of the teacher. Are we to wonder if under such conditions the teacher grows cynical over his own occupation, and at last believes that young minds have been specially created to exercise the ingenuity of the college trainer?

2. *Subjection of all teaching to certain central influences.* When the prizes of a University, or the places offered by Government, are of great importance, either in money or in public esteem, the whole teaching of the country tends to be determined by these central influences. Just as a few successful milliners decree the fashion of the moment, and are mechanically obeyed by an obedient crowd of the *bene nata* and the *bene vestita* in all parts of the country, so do the Universities (or the Government, as the case may be) decree the fashion of learning. The Universities mould the great schools, which adjust their teaching so as to win the prizes they offer; the great schools in turn mould the preparatory schools; and so the evil chain is forged. Thus education—which includes all knowledge, all experiment, all civilisation in itself, which above all the great matters of life demands freedom and space and difference, is compressed and moulded by influences as narrow and nearly as much out-of-sight as those which decide the dresses which our woman-kind receive at the hands of their only half-recognised but almost irresistible tribunal. All fashion that is mechanically obeyed

brings evils, but as education is—*pace* Mr. Worth and M<sup>de</sup>. Elise—a more serious matter than the business of torturing silk into impossible mountains and valleys round the human form, so the evil is the deeper. Men are forever forgetting how great a thing education is; that it is almost equal to the whole sphere of their lives, and therefore can never be reduced to a system, or made over to a set of learned men, or thrown upon a Government Department. If we desire it to be vigorous and healthy, it must be in a constant state of peaceful revolution and flux, always exposed to the varying thought and varying experiences of innumerable minds. If people would only think of education, as they are beginning to think of religion—a thing that is starved morally and intellectually, if once reduced to great and fixed systems—we should enter upon a road where the hope of making progress was greater.

3. *A misleading test as regards the teacher.* The teacher (and this applies to the school as a whole) who can win the greatest number of prizes or honours through his pupils, comes to be considered the best teacher. Whereas in truth for those who require the more valuable results of teaching, such prize winning is in many respects a test of what to avoid rather than what to seek. It is not the fault of the teacher. Commanded by the public to do a certain thing, he does it in the most efficient manner, and becomes a trainer of prizemen, not a teacher; whilst he who remains the real teacher is as the voice crying in the wilderness. An example is furnished of this deflection of public opinion when University Professors are blamed for not being able to secure the attendance of undergraduates at their lectures. How should they? The undergraduate desires to be “coached” for the schools, and that is done as effectively as possible by other persons. It was said of Mr. Ruskin—when a Professor—that he could secure the attendance of any persons at his lectures, excepting the undergraduate reading for his class.\*

4. *Effect on those taught.* What is learnt is learnt in the wrong way. It is learnt to produce at a certain moment and then

\* In the past, and under different circumstances, it was asserted that occasionally teachers of high character successfully prepared their pupils by the simple soundness of their teaching and by resolutely ignoring special preparation for the schools. Under almost any system of competitive examination this intellectual independence—like the independence of a Fawcett in politics—would be of rare occurrence; but in our days, when examination has gained a much more dominant position, and education has receded into an inferior position, it sounds rather like a far-off echo of what has been, than a promise of what now can be.

to throw away. It has been well called "a vast jumble of information" that, like a ship's cargo, is packed, labelled and laded, and then having reached its destination is unladed, consigned, and done with. It is also wrongly learnt because learnt in wild rushes with fever and strain and unrest, the elements of real mental growth being absent,—the slow assimilation and the continuity of acquirement, that should end only with life. Above all, the one vitalising intellectual element is absent, the keen interest in what is taught. "Knowledge for its own sake,"—a phrase against which some of the most hardened believers in examination now begin to utter maledictions hardly under their breath—simply means a deep interest in the subject learnt, an interest which is irrespective of class lists, prizes, or the close of the University period, and which may in some form or another become the master passion of life, making men bear drudgery as pleasure, enlarging their intellectual horizons, and perhaps awakening some part of that consciousness of the surpassing mystery of existence, which does so much to lift man or woman above the every-day level of their own nature. It is hardly too much to say that intellectual education, as such, has failed where this deep interest has not been to some extent developed. A man may have strengthened good and useful qualities, such as close application, perseverance, steadiness in work, quickness of brain, but he would also have acquired these qualities by faithfully following many of the higher trades. Unless he has grown to have this intellectual keenness in life, this desire to understand the life which surrounds him, why, one is tempted to ask, should there exist for him a University course at all? An upper class academy with special reference to his profession had probably served his turn better. I am not disparaging education distinctly conceived on simple and practical lines. For many men a preparation of this kind is what perhaps might fit them better educationally than any other training; but let that be their own choice and for their own selves. Such training is not for the keener intellects, nor is it the highest ideal of University effort.

Again there are other intellectual losses. Reading on set lines and preparing for great examinations means a reliance upon guidance which is hardly likely to develope the virile qualities. The Universities should be to our young men as the stirring-pot in which character is formed. In those few years the great intellectual problems of life should be faced, and the man, who is to be, should



be shaping himself out of the boy. This however is only possible in a very free atmosphere, where all the circumstances lend themselves to growth. There are those who may shrink from the thought of such free and wide life, but it is only so that great characters can be formed. It is as little desirable to stimulate as to repress growth artificially; but there is a touch of leading-strings and intellectual babyishness about our present system, which should be boldly shaken off.

Then the student loses the effect of a strong personality in his teacher. There is sometimes more gain to the student in personal contact with a great mind than in any other part of his work. Mind shapes mind in many indirect ways, and a young man may learn more about the use of his own faculties by watching the ways of thinking in a really great man than by industriously turning over the pages of many books. We may be sure that according to the mould of the teacher will be the cast of student character. If the teachers keep themselves great, so will be the students. If the teachers dwarf themselves by following a narrow system, the same littleness will re-appear in the students.

5. *The men, who are not fitted to gain prizes, suffer.* There is generally real power of a certain kind in these men, possibilities of interest and successful devotion to work, but these things are not discovered in them by others under our present system, nor are they allowed to discover them for themselves. They have to run under the race-conditions which are made for those more likely to win, and which are not their conditions.

6. *Arbitrary selection of subjects and books for examination.* Perhaps some day we may waken to the perception that it is not a good thing either for ourselves or for others to exercise a far-reaching and established authority over large groups of minds. In almost all directions authority, which replaces the action of many personal judgments, and the natural selection that should obtain everywhere, is very antagonistic to progress; and the authority exercised by boards of examiners is no exception. To canonise certain writers and certain views, and to reject others, is to prevent that free trade in thought, which is just as vital to the mental world, as free trade in articles of production is to the commercial world.

7. *Perverted estimate and perverted treatment of subjects.* Not only are subjects artificially valued as they are fitted for the examination-room, but what is more fatal is that the method by

which they are to be studied is fixed by the same considerations. Some day it is to be hoped that we shall get from Cambridge a thorough and searching review of all the consequences which have resulted from the dangerous facility with which mathematics lend themselves to examination ; and then perhaps we may see how far the—I had well-nigh said, prostitution—of a great science to examination purposes, has been favourable to the highest mathematical power, to invention, to originality of thought, to the intellectual character as a whole ; and how far it has been only as a college gymnastic, that has left the student not much richer in the qualities of mental production than what it found him.

8. *Injury to subjects.* As things are, it can only be hoped that some subjects which are most fitted to develope delicate perceptive powers will not be generally taught. To teach English literature in view of a great competitive examination is to run the grave risk of destroying the charm which many minds at a later period might find in it. A subject full of suggestion, of delicate half-lights and shadows, can only be coarsened by such treatment, and the bloom rubbed off from the bud before it has opened. You might as profitably have a competitive examination in religious feelings.

9. *The uniformity produced by prizes.* The great truth that improvement depends on constant difference, and that to secure this difference there must be many minds thinking differently, and carrying their differences of thought into action and experiment, is a truth that as yet hardly bites on the mass of men. Of all truths, which Mr. Spencer has taught, none is more vital to progress. But at present almost every reformer in education, as in other matters, tries to get hold of "*the system*," and to give it a twist in his own direction, feeling perfectly sure that to do so is to make progress. It is hardly necessary to say that there are several distinct influences which make for uniformity ; Government supervision, prizes, which make all educational effort converge in a certain direction, or a fashion mechanically obeyed, each in its own way is fatal to those individual mental differences on which progress absolutely depends.

10. *The machinery employed in external competitive examinations is necessarily defective, and therefore must itself be the cause of certain evils.* We are placed in this hopeless dilemma. We have either to sacrifice the education, which is dominated by the examination ; or we have to dismiss the hope of fixing the position of candidates in any precise and systematic manner. To compare men's work in a

precise and systematic manner, the work must be done under certain closely specified conditions, and therefore under limitations that are fatal to education. On the other hand, the more broadly a subject is treated, the more difficult it is to compare the work of A, B, and C, and to class them in any positive order. In this latter case the personal element of the examiner gains overwhelming importance, and that which one able man would mark as excellent, another will mark as only fair. People have only to think how entirely it would be a matter of personal judgment to "mark" four poems of Wordsworth, Shelley, Browning, and Tennyson, to realise the impossibility of bringing to equal values work done under the conditions of healthy natural difference. In whatever way the four poems were marked, it would mean individual preference, and nothing more. The values are distinct, and cannot be brought to a common denominator. From this evil also springs another. Certain subjects tend to be universally taught, as lending themselves more easily to comparison.

I now come to the apologies for the system. It is urged :—

I. *That it (the prize and honour system) acts as a powerful stimulant, getting hard work out of boys and young men, who otherwise would do little.* There are certain great considerations to be opposed to this. First, that the true stimulant is interest in work—a stimulant which, when once called into existence, is not inferior in strength, and is far healthier, far more lasting, and far more fruitful in great results. The best work of the world has been done under the influence of this motive; and we may roughly but not unfairly divide systems of education into good or bad, as they neglect or employ love of work for work's sake. Secondly, we have to deal—if we understand our business—not simply with youth, but with the manhood by which youth is succeeded, and our decision should be guided less by the immediate effects than the after effects. Looked at from this point of view, the question is, "Are the virtues obtained from the boy or young man only wrung from him by external pressure, and therefore likely to cease with the pressure; or have the seeds of certain qualities been sown, which will continue their growth in his after life?" We all know that it is easy to get striking effects from stimulants of all kinds, but we also know that their effect is specially for the moment, and opposed to the normal processes of health. We are told that some men have been reclaimed from idleness by their examinations.

That is probably true enough. Under every system some men have their periods of idleness, and presently become transformed. But even could the repentant prodigals be cured by this process alone, it could hardly be claimed that a great system, which is to include those who really care for what they learn, should be framed with a special view to the sinners. And is the plea in itself thoroughly sound? If the system cures, does it not also produce the supply of those who need cure? Boys and men are unduly attracted by games, and the pleasures of the undergraduate flesh, because their work is stripped of its own true attractions. It is much like the case of some rather low form of religion, which loudly claims to be established, because it is specially gracious to the weaknesses of men, in forgetfulness of the fact that by being established it blocks the way for those religions which appeal to higher parts of human nature. Thirdly, when we say that only by strong stimulants can work be obtained, we are unconsciously suggesting certain grave faults in the heart of our system. What the present highly artificial state of education means, is that in many cases the subjects that we teach do not bite; and the question will presently force itself upon us whether we have learnt as yet what is the true way of treating boys who are physically active and have strong tendencies to outdoor life? Is Latin or Greek, or even Science, as it is taught, a universal food; and must we not in view of the great differences of temperament enlarge the whole framework of our education? It may be that certain arts and processes largely depending on manual skill will make up, not the whole, but the most important part of the education for such natures. What is plain is that if boys or men of vigorous, healthy characters, must be bribed to learn what very slightly interests them, there is something wrong in the narrow choice that is at present forced upon them, and no tightening of the examination screw will help us out of our difficulties. The cynical assumption that bribes and stimulants furnish the only means of treating such natures, is but a cloak with which we are unconsciously covering up our own mistakes. Here again the evils of uniformity come into view. We mass all human nature together, irrespective of its diverging tendencies, as if it were possible to find one system under which it could be comfortably housed and nourished. But "the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it." Manifold are the wants of human

nature, and manifold must be the systems to satisfy those wants. Enforced uniformity and compression of these wants are the cause of half our human aches ; and in education, as elsewhere, no small part of our failures,—and the resulting facility with which we betake ourselves to stimulants of all kinds,—is because we do not recognise the truth that we must be for ever encouraging varying systems to grow up and satisfy varying wants.

II. *That men at the Universities do not care for the higher teaching ; do not, for example, attend the Professors' lectures.* This is one of our favourite human devices. We make a system, which deprives men of certain aspirations, and then we justify the system by the absence of the aspirations. Given a system, which leads up to a certain portal, and we know that the practical instinct of men will discover the surest means of reaching that portal. The "coach," in this instance, is the surest means, and therefore he, and not the Professor, gets the passengers. Examinations, as they are, leave no place for the Professor. He belongs to another atmosphere, another set of conditions, and we can only be amused when some men, wholly absorbed in working the present system, taunt him with his uselessness, and invite him to conform and to become "coaches" like themselves.

III. *That the steady work needed for an examination develops valuable qualities, e.g., care, perseverance, concentration.* Yes, and the same thing may be said of many skilled trades. Here again the defence means that some boys or men cannot be trusted to work without the use of a sort of strait-waistcoat, and that those who have not this need are to be strait-waistcoated for the sake of their inferior companions. But above all it should be remembered that all these good qualities are to be got in fuller and richer measure where a man's intellectual interest is aroused. Nobody denies that you can get certain immediate results from the use of stimulants. Any fool, it has been somewhat unceremoniously said, can govern with bayonets ; and any person, however deficient in intelligence and just judgment, can educate by means of stimulants.

IV. *That the system saves from desultory work.* It would be well to remember that to save men from the possibilities of going wrong is in most cases to render them a poor service. The man who has been carefully fenced-in and allowed few opportunities of self-guidance is more often in the end destroyed than saved. The great service which a University should perform for men is to help

them to discover what is in themselves, to know their own capabilities, and so to begin to shape the serious purpose of their lives. Desultoriness is not always the evil it seems. It is sometimes the first tasting, the experimenting, the trying of unknown paths; a process which is necessary to some men before they come definitely to terms with themselves. It is, however, not unreasonable that the desultory man should have a strict and formal system at hand, under which he can bind himself down to his work, if he feels in need of such constraint; what is utterly unreasonable is that he, like the repentant prodigal, should expect that the system intended for those who are neither idle nor desultory should be shaped in the image of his own special weaknesses.

V. *That the system counteracts the prevailing attraction of athletics.* That is, we are to set one fire blazing against another fire, though we may very seriously question by which fire it is best or worst to be burnt. It is worth while, however, noticing that the two movements can hardly be called antagonistic, since they flourish so vigorously side by side. Beelzebub has not so much cast out Beelzebub as come to terms with him. Here again, as at so many points, we are forced back upon the key of the whole position. Until intellectual interest is once fairly aroused by the nature of the studies themselves and the attitude of the teachers, those influences which are in rivalry with education are only too likely to remain the master forces. But allow intellectual self-guidance on the part of the student, and independence on the part of the teacher, as the true means of evoking interest, and at once the opposing influences begin to dwindle and lose their strength before that which in a fair field is a greater power than themselves.

VI. *That it brings the pretentious to the test, and detects the impostor.* There is, one may easily believe, a certain truth in this. But the test is a scholastic test, and just as narrow and fallible as tests usually are. Life is the only true touchstone we have, and even contemporary life makes its mistakes. One doubts, moreover, whether or not our desire to erect ourselves into a tribunal for the sake of the pretentious is a wise one, and suspects that the wheat and the tares can only be safely distinguished by the more natural processes, that come later. Any way, the impostor must not be granted greater power to dictate our educational system than the repentant prodigal or the desultory man. In truth, if we are not on our guard,

our system will presently become one wholly constructed for all the various mental cripples that are to be found in the world, and for nobody else.

VII. *That you could not trust Teachers without some such test.* But, once again, this is sacrificing the best to the inferior. For the sake of some third-rate or fifth-rate men, you destroy the highest forms of teaching excellence. The foundation of all good teaching is the individuality of the teacher, and this is to be given up for the sake of obtaining a certain low average result from the mass. Such is the constant effect of widely established system. Most of the systems that exist in the world seem to be specially created for the sake of the "nervous-respectables," a large class of worthy but unperceiving people, who shiver equally at the idea of possible scandal—as if the world could in any real sense be free from scandal—and of energy unregulated by themselves. Could they have their way they would gradually construct for us a millenium of commonplace, white without and rotten within, the mere contemplation of which at a distance should perceptibly raise the rate of suicide.

VIII. *That in the case of public funds or endowments, such tests offer the only sufficient security against misapplication.* If so, I can only hope that light will be borne in upon many minds, and their owners will see that the evils which accompany grants of public money are always in the end far in excess of the benefits. The truth is, though we prefer not to see it, that no money can compensate for the mischief which inheres in these big established systems. Sterilising uniformity, loss of personal choice and of self-direction, and consequently loss of interest, are such fatal injuries, that it is in vain we turn on a river of gold to fertilise our favourite schemes. A correspondent, writing the other day, gave expression to the pious wish that educational endowments might be piled on board ship, and safely deposited in mid-Channel. Those who realise the sterilising effects of authority and orthodoxy and established system in education, of central departments and official inspections, of reforms *ab extra* and imposed tests, will understand in part, at least, how much might be said for the mid-Channel solution. The immediately practical lesson, however, that has to be learnt, is to allow free growth for other systems by the side of the established system, whatever it may be. Generally the official system, in despite of all its advantages, trembles, like a ghost-haunted person, for its own existence, and will not tolerate a rival.

IX. *Shews both Teacher and Student where they have failed.* There may well be a certain truth,—tinged, perhaps, a little too much with the virtue of humility,—in this defence; but it is a question whether the familiar expression “what a shame to have set such a paper” does not sum up the normal feelings of both Tutor and Student more accurately. Under any circumstances however, the indication may be as much in the wrong direction as in the right to those of a teachable disposition; for the moral of the examination is apt to be “more conformity, less independence.”

X. *The subjects allowed to be taken up are now so many, that no one can complain of restrictions in choice.* It is a gain to a man that he should be free to choose his subject, but far transcending the importance of the subject is the method of its treatment. The most subtle and at the same time the most mischievous restrictions are those which prevent the free handling of a subject. One who wished to lead the life of a student of natural science would probably be nearer his goal by studying philology under a great teacher, teaching in his own way, than by filling his mind with text-books, directly bearing on his subject, in view of an examination.

XI. *The system may not be the best for the highest class of minds, but is for the mass of men.* That is impossible; for the mass depend on the higher minds, and if these are hindered in their development, and so cannot act on the mass by influence and example, the mass will remain what they are. The mass are not advanced by systems, but by the action of all that is best and highest among themselves, and for the sake of the mass the best must always have free play. The two interests are inseparable; and just as the world has partly learnt that the best can hardly advance unless the mass are advancing, so has it still to learn that the mass cannot advance except under the stimulus of their best minds. It only requires to think carefully of the improvement of plant and animal to see that all improvement is through the best, and the fact that in the case of men we have to deal with the elements of influence and example takes nothing away from the same truth as applied to them.

XII. *That preparation for examination exactly foreshadows the hurried preparation for work which lawyer, doctor, politician, and others have constantly to make in life.* No doubt the temptation to “cram” and be content with cram, that is, to be content with using knowledge for its momentary purposes, is strong all



through life; but the really useful man in all higher senses is the man who is never content in himself with such momentary alliances with knowledge, but is always seeking to form the truer union. The qualities of rapidly accumulating and brilliantly using knowledge for a particular purpose are so liberally rewarded in life, that we need not trouble ourselves to specially cultivate and endow them during the time of education. Education has rather to care for those deeper parts of the intellectual nature which are not favoured by the driving work of life, but which underlie all real greatness of intellectual character.

XIII. *That the evil of examinations lies in their abuse, not in their use.* On this point above all others we have need to clear our minds. Setting aside the case of examinations, used by the teacher for his own purposes, our contention is that external examination—however convenient for certain purposes—is, and must be, vicious in essence, because of the loss of independence in the teacher, and the wrong spirit—the limitations and want of interest—with which the student learns. These two leading evils, with all their accompanying host of lesser evils, seem to be inseparable from those examinations which are divorced from teaching. They tend to be at their worst when the examination—conducted externally—is a competition for places; they tend to be least productive of mischief when the examination is of a qualifying character, and if (an “if” that generally belongs to the regions of the ideal) the examiners are content to discover that the candidate has done good work of a kind not distinctly specified. But why run the danger of inflicting a wholesale injury upon education? Why not employ our teachers as examiners, and take the certificates given by them as evidence of the student’s good conduct and industry? “Because we cannot trust our teachers,” says the believer in tests and systems and fetters of all kinds. “You certainly cannot trust your systems” might be our retort, but what is more important is to point out to these victims of misdirected doubt that the public for its own sake must learn to discriminate between the good and bad teachers. As long as the public are ignorant and not seeking to understand, the hope of good teachers or good education is in vain. “But why regard the public at all?” may again be urged by the mistrustful ones. “Education is a matter for the experts and not the public.” To which it must be answered that the one great truth of democracy—rightly understood—is that nothing is for the experts, taken

separately as a class. Most valuable are the experts when seeking to instruct, to convince, and to act through the body of those concerned and interested ; most mischievous, when they try to set this body aside, and act as if the matter in question were their own private domain. In this great matter, therefore, of education, it is of the first necessity that the public should become intelligent as regards their own wants and the best methods of satisfying them ; and the quicker that we can persuade our believers in system that to try to shunt the public and act in disregard of them is only to make progress of an unreal and misleading kind, the better for all of us. We are then driven to the conclusion that it is misapplied labour to seek to reform external examinations. To preserve them is only to preserve the comfortable belief on the part of the parents that they need not know or understand anything of what is done. We shall do no good until we see that improved education means the improvement of public judgment in educational matters ; and at the same time that the evils of our external system are inherent in it, and inseparable from it. Of all vain cries the cry of reforming the examiners seems the vainest. Why should they be reformed when the conditions remain unchanged ? Are our innumerable examiners to develop all the human virtues at word of command ? So also to diminish the number of subjects taken up ; to split subjects up, as one reformer proposes ; to mass them together, as another proposes ; to alter the method of marking ; all such devices can only give a slightly varying complexion to the evils which result. There can be no reform of external examinations, for they are founded on a wrong principle,—the subjection of the minds of teacher and taught to other minds, and of these other minds again to the system that happens to exist.

XIV. *That there is considerable mischief in our present examinations, but that the mischief is largely exaggerated.* To those who make use of such an excuse much the same reply must be made. If mischief is resulting, there must be a cause for the mischief. What is that cause ? Is it, or is it not, what has just been urged, the dependence of teacher and taught ? Now this dependence is not a detail, but a great principle affecting the framework of the system ; and if it is wrong in itself, it necessarily vitiates all that we are doing. Of course it is open to any person—with a slight turn for paradox—to deny the evil, and affirm the gospel of intellectual dependence ; and in doing so to maintain that the present attack

is altogether misdirected. If, however, this line is not taken, it is hard to see how the attack can be exaggerated, for the evil goes to the root of the whole matter.

There is, however, a circumstance which favours the idea of an exaggerated attack. People see great qualities existing in many of the teachers and many of the taught,—perseverance, resolution, concentration, sense of duty,—and forgetting how all these qualities may be found under bad systems, how even a system, such as slavery was, may co-exist with many good human qualities, they judge the system leniently for the sake of the righteous people who are to be discovered living under it. The truth is, that wherever there is vigour in a society, excellent people will be found giving semblance of life to systems that in themselves are dying and ought to die. None the more does such imparted virtue make the systems good.

XV. *Examination has greatly served the cause of education; it raised education from a very low state, which low state might recur, if external examinations were abandoned.* It is perfectly true that examination was the instrument of reform used when the country was beginning to wake from its educational sleep, but instruments are not to be confounded with moving causes. The moving cause was the Zeit-Geist, and examination was simply the instrument it employed. It might have employed another instrument or another process, as Germany did. Those who hold the belief that, because examination did good service in the past, therefore it must do good service now, shut their eyes to the fact that our instruments of progress are always being changed. Such persons are much like those who would urge that because “Brown Bess” is associated with British victories in the past, therefore she should be in the hands of our troops of to-day. Indeed the very circumstance of fitness in the past should have warned the cautious man against the idea of fitness in the present. If competitive examination was the instrument of bringing us out of an abject and benighted condition, it is hardly probable that it is a suitable instrument for further progress now that we have emerged from that state, and are separated from it by a considerable interval. It would indeed be a remarkable coincidence if this special instrument were of such a two-edged and double-natured type that it equally fitted the requirements of the two periods, which diverge so much in character. External and competitive examination was a remedy, for which a good deal might have been plausibly said, when no iron threads of

communication yet existed, when provincial districts were cut off from each other by bad roads, when the press was in its infancy, and there were few means of appealing to public opinion or directing public choice in such matters. Now the whole face of things is changed. We cannot forget that we have an altogether new set of instruments in our hands for acting on the public ; and to continue doggedly to pin our faith to a system, whose function was to act in the place of public vigilance and interest, when these things could hardly exist, would be to play the part of a doctor who continues to administer violent drugs to a recovered patient, because they once benefited him in the acute stage of his illness.

XVI. *That competitive examination is the great means of helping poor boys.* What is meant by poor boys? If sons of those fairly-to-do parents, who could not without difficulty send all their numerous sons to the University and into professions, unless some of the flock gained scholarships, perhaps yes ; but few persons would maintain that our public school foundations are crowded by the sons of workmen. As has been often pointed out, the expense of the previous training tells against the poorer parent ; and even if, under special arrangements, a certain number of boys should come through by competition from national schools to any of our endowed schools, and so on to the Universities, it would be at the price of giving a great and mischievous stimulus to competitive examination. Under such a system the national schools would be destined to become the hot-bed of competitive learning and teaching,—a last state, as bad as their first. Nor would things be bettered by nominating only the children of poor parents to scholarships, as is sometimes proposed. Under this system very undesirable elements would be introduced. In the interests of poverty itself, it should never be made an advantage to be poor. It is wrong to establish a system by which A is preferred to B because he is the poorer. Nature, which is wiser than we often see, penalises poverty, and whenever we work in the opposite direction, and put advantages on the side of poverty, we set ourselves in opposition to her process, which is in the end towards getting rid of poverty altogether. Do not let these words be thought harsh. Poverty can be got rid of under a free system, that conforms to nature, a system where energies are not impeded, where artificial stimuli are not allowed to replace the natural stimuli, where actions bring their own consequences for good or for evil, and where, whilst no special privileges exist for the rich, at the same

time poverty is not protected and endowed, and thus stereotyped in its own form as poverty. To that end of getting rid of poverty we should steadily work as our highest duty, nerving ourselves to refuse all momentary palliatives, which may endanger the end itself. Under the head of remedies I have sketched what I think might be practically done.

XVII. *That as regards girls, it is a great step to have got them educated at all, and therefore the present work should not be disturbed.* This is one of those cynical arguments which, like the stimulus argument, is not worthy to shape the future. The cynics should be listened to; but whilst there is much that may be learnt from them, they are bad to follow as guides. The real danger, however, is not the cynics; but that those who take part in the woman's movement should be possessed by a feeling of rivalry with men, as well as by the desire to do what is best for women. This rivalry—which tends to make certain bad copies persist—is a thing to be exorcised as an utterly misleading and perverting influence,—natural enough perhaps, when we consider all the circumstances of the past,—but none the less to be resolutely cast out of the hearts of those who have the responsibility of leading women on great questions.

I now, for the sake of clearness, propose to throw much of what has been said into the form of principles, on which, as I believe, all successful education must be founded,—successful, in the sense of producing the highest type of character.

1. That no system is right which sacrifices either the best to the mass, or the mass to the best.

2. That systems with the minimum of artifice and regulation, and with the widest scope for individual qualities and individual choice, are the only systems that in the end avoid both these evils. That such systems necessarily rest on the free consent of those who are taught, and therefore cannot be employed to compel work from the idle, and are only spoilt for their purpose when it is attempted so to employ them.

3. That the idle, therefore, must either be treated under systems peculiar to themselves, or left to undertake their own reformation; that in no case are the industrious and the intellectually-interested to be sacrificed by being placed under systems invented for the idle and apathetic. That virtues, which are obtained by regulation and rigorous system, are only half virtues, are easily lost, and have but an uncertain influence on the after life.

4. That any system is self-condemned, where the higher motives cannot act freely ; and under which energies of a lower character are favoured at the expense of the higher energies.

5. That neither teacher nor taught can be at their best when they lose their independence and self-direction, and are obliged to conform to methods imposed on them from without.

6. That all influences which tend towards uniform thought and action in education are most fatal to any regularly continuous improvement. That such continuous improvement depends upon continuous difference in thought ; and such difference in thought depends upon whether it is worth while for people to think,—in other words, whether such thought can practically bear fruit, and readily pass into action and experiment. Under central systems there is no room left for such individual action and experiment, and therefore no stimulus for thought.

7. That centralising influences are of many and various kinds. Amongst them are prizes and competitions extending over a large area of education, endowments which fortify powerful existing systems, examinations conducted by those who have not taught the examined, examinations conducted by the State, or by the Universities in the case of those who are not their own members, examinations regulated by those who are in possession of the gates of the professions, and grants of public money accompanied by tests or official inspections ; and no remedy for existing evils is to be expected by substituting some of these forms of centralisation for others, but only by allowing the utmost freedom for new wants and new forms of thought to express themselves in new systems, and to compete with the old.

8. That education is so dependent for health and growth upon many different feelings and experiences, is so multiform in its aspects, so nearly coterminous with the sphere of life itself, that it can never, without disastrous effect, be reduced to any established system, or handed over to the direction of any set of men, however learned or carefully selected ; that it must always be in touch with the general intelligence of the country, the two interacting on each other and advancing together.

9. That there are in education a true and natural competition, and an artificial competition, which are opposed to each other ; that under the effect of this natural competition, education grows with the growth of general intelligence,—more intelligent demands being

made by parents on behalf of their children, and greater thought and skill being called out in reply on the part of the teachers ; that artificial competition arrests the progress of this natural competition, since it offers tests and assurances to the public without any necessity for knowledge or intelligence on their own part, and therefore breaks the natural relation between the education given to the children and the general intelligence in regard to it of the parents and those most interested.

10. That as the only true safeguard for the quality of any education lies in the interest and vigilance of those principally concerned, it is much to be desired that schools and colleges should seek to offer to parents and others full opportunities of understanding the nature of the education given and the methods pursued ; that many different experiments on the part of schools and teachers are required to discover the best methods of bringing parents into such relation with the education given to their children.

11. That neither ancient endowments should be administered in such manner, nor should the State supply its own wants in such manner as to lower the general conceptions of the public as regards education ; that a true temper in educational matters is of supreme importance to the progress of the people, and should never be endangered for the sake of certain incidental and detached advantages.

I now come to the remedies.

*University teaching.* I believe that the solution of the difficulty lies in what I think was suggested by Prof. Max Müller, a separate and higher course through which the student who does not require the stimulus of examination should be free to pass. The degree which crowned such a course might be won by the satisfactory certificates of the various Professors (free to conduct such personal examinations as they chose) whose courses he had attended, supplemented, if considered advisable (on both sides of which question I believe a good deal is to be said) by some piece of original work. Such a course should be left to take its chance on its own merits. Whilst scholarships and fellowships should be brought to an end, there should be no interference with the present schools and the present class list ; they should simply find themselves in the presence of a rival, which might or might not, according to its own fitness, gradually draw from them their vitality. Sweeping revolutions—or rather, wholesale destructions—are always to be avoided, each tending to be succeeded by another. The truer

method is to introduce the higher form, and let it struggle for its life with the lower form. Then, if it succeeds, it succeeds because its superior fitness gives it the right to do so, and not because it has been imposed by authority *ab extra*.

As regards the endowments that would result from suppressed scholarships, the opportunity should be taken to employ these funds, so far as they are of charitable origin, more truly in the interests of the poor, yet without endowing poverty, and with the least possible injury to education—some injury, probably, there must be. Certain applications suggest themselves. University extension in the form of teaching, not examining, in the provinces; reduction of fees for attendance at certain lectures; more Professorial chairs; buildings, with libraries, for the convenience of the non-collegiate members who are naturally drawn from the poorer sections of society. I would boldly apply all the revenues for these and kindred purposes, raising slightly if necessary—which it should not be—the fees of the undergraduates who fill the colleges, and who should not receive any advantages—special to themselves—from endowments which it could be shewn were originally intended for the poor.

*As regards schools in general*, it has been already stated in what direction we must look for improvement when the test of winning scholarships is removed. The remedy lies in an active and friendly co-operation between parents and teachers, and, with a view to this end, in freedom of experiment, and in greater publicity as regards what is done. Let the teachers' terminal examination be in presence of the parents, and, if in some cases it is thought well, of an external assessor as a guarantee that all is fair and above-board; let some part of the actual work done during the term, and during the examination, find its way into the parents' hands. There is room for much ingenuity and much experiment; and when the centralising influences are removed there will be no lack of these. It is not desired that the parent should be invited to interfere in any way with the school work—for that he is very unfit—but that he should see and know the methods followed, so as to be able to judge intelligently between different schools.

But once more let it be said that the public will never be able to look after their own great interests, unless they shake off that nervous timidity which shrinks from the possibility of occa-



sional abuses. Under every free system there will be abuses; but only under free systems can there be real excellence. Real excellence is cheap even at the cost of many abuses; for not only is it the secret of all upward movement, but it is the only force which, by its reaction upon the indifferent mass, effectually removes the abuses themselves, not simply concealing or disguising them.

*As regards our great Public Schools*, the endowments attached to them should be spent in a manner more distinctly to reach the poor. It is absolutely necessary that we who are the richer classes should purge ourselves from the suspicion of profiting by endowments that were of charitable origin; and this can be done, and should be done, without disturbing the present general character of these schools. Part of the endowments which are now used for creating a body of stipendiary scholars, might go towards defraying the cost of model secondary or technical day schools, open at moderate fees to those who have attended the elementary national schools, and placed under the authorities of the public school in question, to be managed as they thought right; and part might go towards model elementary schools, which should be left under the same management. As long as we have a so-called national system of education, it is of great importance that the monotony of the official pattern should be broken by some institutions not under Whitehall control; nor need we be deterred by the argument that such a step would lighten the rates for certain districts. No greater boon to a district could be devised than lightening the rates, whilst at the same time we should have an independent and better type of educational institutions for workmen. Two things are clear. Endowments given for charitable purposes should be placed in some simple or natural fashion within reach of the poor; though in the interests of the poor themselves, no hard lines should be drawn, nor should any person be disqualified from taking advantage of them. They should simply be open to all. In discussing this question it is only fair to the rich to remember that they have made a very large contribution by rate and tax on behalf of elementary education, and thus discharged in the main the original purposes of charitable endowments. But this consideration should not stand in the way of restoring the endowments. That is the simpler and juster course to take, and will also render easier what I strongly hope will happen some day, the passing of our elementary official system into many different voluntary systems.

Secondly, the endowments should not be allowed to injure education. The wrong done—unintentionally and unconsciously, as I believe—to the poor under the present system has been curiously punished by the injury, self-inflicted, on the education of the rich. The rich, indeed, should be more urgent in their prayers for restitution than the poor. Of course if the friends of our Public Schools, who are many and powerful, were unwise enough to wish to preserve the school foundations as they now exist, it would be no difficult task for them to raise a fund for perpetuating such a mischievous state of things.

*As regards those boarding schools which are partly supported by charitable endowments*, the disturbance may perhaps be greater. Boarding schools are almost necessarily for classes that have more means than the workmen, and such endowments should go in their entirety to some such purpose, as secondary day schools. Where the endowments are but small, it would probably be easy—if it were desired to do so—to raise a sum equal to that which was diverted, without much disturbance of what exists. All good schools have powerful friends in those who have left them. But it is well to allude here to another and distinct question affecting the endowment of boarding schools. There is a body of persons who are becoming strongly opposed to the plan of boarding boys in the same houses. Far the truer plan seems to be that the boy should, if possible, whilst attending school, live in his own home; if not in his own home, then in some other home. On this point, whether those of us who object to barrack-life for either boys or girls, are right or wrong, it seems likely that the question of the application of old endowments may hasten the coming controversy on this point. At present there are only faint mutterings in the air, but the signs are sufficient that a storm is slowly gathering, which will, I think, startle some people by the intense feelings it will bring to the surface.

*As regards Elementary National Education* the present Privy Council system is clearly doomed. The Department has nothing left for it but to accept the sentence of “Hands off,” and retire, as gracefully as it can, from existence. There is no other fate possible for it. The folly of setting three or four respectable gentlemen to sit in a room in Whitehall, and spin a uniform system for the whole country, is slowly dawning upon a certain number of minds; and at the same time the localities are very near the point of perception that they may just as well obtain direct possession of a tax, raised in their

own district, free from conditions, as receive the same tax through the Department, accompanied by all the conditions that Whitehall is pleased to impose. Mr. Goschen's kiss has roused the sleeping beauty; and the grant of certain Imperial funds to the locality marks a new development in our history, and with it the abdication of our impossible and "quite unspeakable" London Department. So far is clear; on the further future the clouds rest. Still, personally I have faith that the new forces coming into existence will move in the direction of those of us who are pure Voluntarists in education. When the yoke of the centre is broken, and the locality is supreme, the first effect will probably be an outburst of feverish activity; but presently the desire to diverge easily and in friendly fashion, the dislike of uniform machinery, the dislike of the bitter struggle to get hold of the machine, the growing tolerance and sense that some men cannot rightly impose their system on others,—all these feelings will be strengthened by decentralisation, and gradually, perhaps by the way of concessions like those once existing in Canada,—I do not know if they still exist,—where the rate might be paid to any one of certain schools, we shall be receding from the ideal of compulsory association to the far higher ideal of voluntary association. We may have many experiences, many dreary struggles for power to go through first, we may spend our energies in building up a succession of huge systems by the employment of public authority and public money,—each system after a few years to be got rid of as a failure, and replaced by some new construction from which for a short time everything is expected;—we may spend many years wandering in this wilderness of attempts and failures, but at last the irresistible truth will break upon us, that not in one thing, but in all things, good work and the compulsion of each other lie at opposite poles, that good work can only be looked for where men are giving their energies to the carrying out of their own ideas, and not serving systems which others have invented for them to live under. So, too, men will feel that good work is of too subtle a nature to be recognised by tests or inspections or externally appointed guardians of any kind, but that it must be recognised through the preferences of the public, selecting and rejecting according to its ever-growing taste, sympathy, and knowledge. If men once perceived how like influences produced like results, they would see that the same freedom which has revolutionised our markets in the commercial world must

as completely revolutionise our markets in the educational world. But freedom of trade—admirable as are many of its results—can never bear its best fruit, or even fruit much worth having, unless it is based on general intelligence. A system that leaves the people to satisfy their own desires in their own way pre-supposes intelligence. And how are we to get this general intelligence? There is one, and only one, answer. By free trade itself. By constant daily practice of those things which require intelligence; by constant daily practice in the science and art of living. We can only learn through desires and actions and resulting consequences; and we have to recognise, however reluctantly, that protection of every kind,—if it pass beyond the sphere of moral influence and example,—authoritative systems, official tests and inspections, that all such things are only devices for preventing our learning this lesson of life, devices, for persuading us that we can by some action of others be made vicariously intelligent or happy; and it might be added, devices, for accumulating penalties,—which are never finally avoided, only deferred,—up to the very point of disaster. The education question is not to be separated from the other great questions of life. The same laws are over them all alike. In them all alike we are thrown back absolutely and entirely upon the self that is within us, and the influences that act upon it. Unless that self is being practised in the responsibilities of life, unless it is stumbling and falling and rising again over the difficulties that confront it, unless it is growing under self-appointed tasks, and advancing by self-found roads, we may be only too sure that in vain is the care of the man who builds the house, or the watchman who wakes early to defend it.

## APPENDIX.

*The following Extracts are from "Examination and Education,"*

*Leonard Scott Publication Co., New York.*

### PRESIDENT ADAMS, CORNELL UNIVERSITY.

Such a forcing process is apt to beget a dislike of the work ; it sets up wrong ideals ; it keeps wrong ends in view ; it substitutes small things for great things ; in a word, it tends to deaden those scholarly impulses which most successfully lead on to great results, and puts in their place a slavish devotion to matters of far less importance. If I may be allowed to speak from my own personal observation, I desire to say that one of the most confident convictions resulting from my own experience as a teacher of history, is the belief that, as a rule, the best work has been done where there has been the largest freedom, and the least satisfactory work where there has been the most rigid system of examinations and marks. . .

. . . But, further than what is necessary to inform the teacher whether the pupil is doing his duty to himself and the class, I believe all term examinations and all marking tests exert a depressing influence upon the higher kinds of scholarship. And this is the reason, I suppose, why great teachers like Pestalozzi and Agassiz and Hopkins have abhorred all systems of marking and have had so little love for examinations. . . . And it cannot be denied, I think, that the German methods on the whole are superior to the methods of the English. Experience in America, moreover, so far as it has gone, I believe fully accords with experience in Germany. At Baltimore and in what is known as "the University method" at Ann Arbor, examinations are limited to the final test for the degree ; and the experiment, if it may be called such, has demonstrated beyond the possibility of doubt that students working under it carry on their studies with more enthusiasm and with more success than under the old methods.

## CHANCELLOR HALL, UNIVER. NEW YORK.

I knew, on the other hand, a professional man who rose to the highest place in his line, who said : " I was counted hopelessly stupid in school—' a blockhead ' in fact ; but I was learning all the time, in my own way. The teachers did their duty and duly punished me almost daily ; but they had not the sense to see the way in which my mind was working." . . . During six or seven years of service as a Commissioner of National Education in Ireland, I was brought into contact with groups of teachers brought for training to the Central Normal School in Dublin, and in many cases the young men and women who made the most brilliant show in the regulation examinations, fell, in practical teaching power, far below the competitors they had beaten.

## PROFESSOR ANGELL, UNIVER. MICHIGAN.

For many years we have had here (University of Michigan) no marking system, class rank, honors or prizes of any kind, unless the diploma of graduation be deemed such. Students have been asked to work for the sake of learning. Of course, if any were not disposed to work, they were sent away. But the appeal has been simply to the desire of the student to train and store his mind. It is the conviction of those who had previously taught in Colleges and Universities which have the marking system, class rank, honors and prizes, and who are now teaching here, that the aggregate result under our system is far better. It is possible that in the former institutions a few men at the head of each class who are contending for rank, attain to higher technical excellence in minute details of study ; but we hold stoutly to the belief that broader, heartier, better work is done by the mass of our students than would be done under the other system, and that the spirit of study begotten by the simple appeal to study for the sake of the attainments and discipline is greatly to be preferred to that which is stimulated by the hope of pecuniary reward or class rank.

## MR. H. W. MABIE, NEW YORK.

What is needed is a clear perception of the fact that examinations are largely usurping the function in our public schools of direct personal teaching ; that quality of instruction which opens

the mind, develops its faculties, trains them to exact operation, and instils a love of knowledge for its own sake. . . . In this city, however, the examination system, as applied not only to pupils but to teachers, is fast turning the public school into a mechanical contrivance, whose chief, and often whose sole, end seems to be to cover a certain programme of studies. . . . But both machinery and method must be kept subordinate, if pupils and teachers are to be preserved from the mechanical spirit, the decay of zeal, and the perfunctory diligence, to which instruction is reduced when the soul is eliminated. . . . Under the examination system, as practised in many of our public schools, there is not only no possible appeal to character, but there is a distinct influence against its growth. In order to cover the required ground teachers are obliged to stultify themselves and violate their consciences by pushing forward pupils who are not equal to the required speed, and in some cases, it is said, to make returns which are essentially untrue. Culture suffers even more than character from this process, since the very essence of culture is that assimilation of knowledge with the individual nature which makes it part of the pupil's mind and heart. Here the personal element—the element, that is, which comes from the instructor in the form of stimulus, inspiration, awakening of mind, direction of thought—entirely disappears, and so far as the mere matter of learning is concerned it is questionable whether anything is ever learned which is learned by rote, or, if learned, whether such knowledge is ever thoroughly available. Mr. Emerson's remark that it matters little what one studies, but much with whom one studies, suggests the primary power in education. The teacher who is an automaton, worked by an examination system, is simply the hired operator of a piece of machinery, and not a living soul in contact with other living souls, and the pupils under such a teacher's charge become as automatic as himself. It is axiomatic that the end of education is not to cram the mind with facts, but to make it see them and decide for itself, to instil that love of learning which becomes an independent impulse, and to awaken it to the joy and wonder of a life which is itself a great education.

PROF. HARRIS, CONCORD, MASS.

A subject should be studied so as to comprehend the process of its evolution—each fact is to be seen in the light of all other

facts that belong to its process. The work of cramming for an examination neglects the study of the evolution of the subject, and devotes itself to memorizing the points of erudition, and the direct results of observation. Instead of the method of investigation, which is the highest method of school work, it sets a reward for methods based on mechanical memorizing. The examiners are overtasked; having to labour through four or five thousand pages of manuscript a week. This labour of marking results, leads them more and more to make their questions such that a clear and decisive answer can be given in a few words, and hence, on the other hand, the competitors learn to study all books with an eye to the "points" that the examiner is apt to seize upon. . . . If an outside board of examiners is created, there arises an outside, extra-professional corps of crammers or "coaches," and between these two bodies the professional teacher is crushed and his work destroyed.

#### PRESIDENT MAGILL, SWARTHMORE COLLEGE.

Let me say, then, in the outset, that studying for a thorough comprehensive knowledge of the subject in hand, and studying for any specific examination, are two operations of the mind entirely distinct and different from each other. The former necessarily includes wide and extensive reading upon all of the collateral points bearing more or less directly upon the subject, and so forms that habit of thorough and complete investigation, which is characteristic of profound scholarship in any department, and which cannot be too earnestly cultivated nor too early acquired. The latter, on the other hand, tends to narrow down and concentrate the attention upon such points as, from experience and observation, have been found most likely to be dwelt upon by the examiner. A great facility in answering specific sets of questions is thus acquired, which facility really represents no deep and thorough knowledge of the subject. These remarks apply with especial force when the examiner is a different person from the one who has given the instruction. This is, almost invariably, an error. No one can so well question students upon any subject as the one from whom the instruction has been received. . . . First of all, then, let the rule be established that those who give the instruction shall themselves conduct the examinations. This will necessitate the general adoption of the principle of promo-



tion based upon certificates from all schools and institutions of learning, for admission to institutions of higher grade. Our colleges would thus admit to their classes, whenever practicable, by certificates of the heads of the Preparatory Schools. And this change has been found to work well in practice wherever it has had a fair trial.

#### PROFESSOR ROGERS, HAVERFORD COLLEGE.

It is almost a truism, since the days of Matthew Arnold, at least, that in Germany, the land of few examinations, scholarship has touched a mark far beyond that reached in England, where an examination begins everything and concludes everything. And after all has been said about the influence of the German's superb climate, few would hesitate to admit that comparative exemption from examinations has something to do with the intellectual freedom he shows in differing so early and so vigorously with his masters, and that this same exemption has some effect upon the amount of time he is able to give to research. . . . Further, if there be no marking during these reviews, there will be less danger of inducing students to conform to the expressed opinions of their instructors, and opportunity will be given for freedom of thought.

#### PROF. THOMPSON, UNIVER. OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Thus far we have managed to avoid the worst defect of the English system in that we have kept the work of examining in the hands of those who did the teaching, which minimizes the demand for cramming. In three points we have departed from that ideal:

1. We have examined students for admission to our Universities and colleges, instead of accepting the certificate of the schools from which they come. But now a rapidly increasing number of the higher institutions, our University included, will accept certificates in lieu of examinations, and in the course of time all must do so.
2. We have established a system of appointment to office under the national and some of the local governments through competitive examinations, a method which is as stupid in its political aspects as threatful of mischief to our educational system. . . .
3. One American University went into the business of examining the graduates of girls' schools. It now is doing much better for women than asking them what they know.

But even examinations conducted by the actual teachers may be productive of a great deal of pressure and cram, and have the effect of teaching young men to regard a subject as a thing to be dismissed from the mind when the examination has been passed. It is much better to make examinations a penalty for the worse and idler students than a rule for the whole class. This is now permitted to the professors of our College Faculty, but not imposed upon them; and those who have adopted the new method are very well satisfied with it, as—I understand—are the faculty of Amherst College, where it has been in operation for a good while. I do not know what other colleges have adopted it. It is well to remember that examinations are a thing of yesterday. They are merely a clumsy substitute for the old “disputations in the schools,” and long before they were invented it was found possible to make scholars who loved their work.

HON. J. EATON, MARIETTA COLLEGE.

. . . . I have seen more injustice, more harm done by strangers than by teachers. Indeed, my conviction became so strong on this point that I was more and more disinclined to take the class and ask the questions myself in an oral test. I came to believe that I could form a more correct opinion by observing the work of the class in the hands of their regular teacher, both in general and as to the quality of that performed by each pupil.

CHANCELLOR SIMS, SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY.

They certainly should never be given with a view to determine the comparative scholarship of two persons. The student's knowledge of the subject pursued is the only legitimate end of examinations. Taken in connection with his early record of work, they form a just and necessary basis of promotion from class to class. The whole system of bestowing prizes, scholarships, and other honors upon the results of examinations seems to me vicious and hurtful. First, it incorporates an unworthy motive into student thought, and almost invariably results in unworthy methods. These methods create a feverish anxiety to make the recitation effective, rather than a desire that the knowledge gained shall be accurate and comprehensive. They tend to induce neglect of whatever work

does not contribute to the winning of prizes. In this respect they perpetually tend to the narrowing of scholarship. They obscure, at least temporarily, the higher purposes with which studies should be prosecuted. As a result of these improper motives, when the prizes are distributed, there is an immense amount of envy, strife, and jealousy aroused, which ought never to appear among fellow-students. They can never be administered so as to reward equally the fidelity and labour of the competitors. The ill-prepared student, the student of slow mind, or of feeble health, being unable to win prizes upon equal terms with one of better preparation, more vigorous health, and quicker intellectual perceptions, I believe that higher education would be decidedly promoted if every prize awarded for comparative scholarship should be abolished.

### ERRATA.

Asterisks should be attached to the names of Professor Freeman, p. 166, and  
Mr. F. Harrison, p. 170.

For "Mrs." read Miss S. S. Burton, p. 128.

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